

EMERGENT ALLIES:
DECOLONIZING HAWAI'I FROM A FILIPIN@ PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation maps a critical terrain of anti-imperialist Filipin@s in Hawai‘i from 1990-2015. I investigate those Filipin@ writers, community leaders and activists who take seriously the role of (neo)colonialism in the ongoing fight for self-determination in both Hawai‘i and the Philippines. I pay particular attention to the influence of Hawaiian sovereignty movement(s) on these contributions, while also investigating the way texts resist anti-Indigenous racism, torture, war, (trans)misogyny, and global capitalism. My intervention marks a shift from a framework of “Filipino Americans” arriving on “American soil,” to a history from below that decenters the U.S. and prioritizes decolonial alliances.

This era is marked by several historical milestones including the 100-year anniversary of the overthrow in 1993; the election of Hawai‘i’s first Filipin@ American governor in 1994; the 100-year anniversary of the Philippine revolution in 1996; the 100-year anniversary of the multiple annexations in 1998 (including Philippines and Hawai‘i); and the 100-year anniversary of the *sakadas*’ arrival to Hawai‘i in 2006. This period also marks the wars on/of terror and the attendant rise in mass surveillance, racialized torture, and deportation. I approached my archive with attention to the historical circumstances within which they were produced, the historical echoes of Filipin@ anti-colonial history, and the decolonial futures these artists, writers, and community leaders envision.

I conceive of my dissertation as a kind of gathering of speech acts, both literary and activist. My archive includes English print culture, oral history interviews, and autoethnography. Plays and poetry serve a primary role in terms of traditional literary texts; I also include one government report on torture, one documentary film, newspaper articles, fiction, and

commemorative documents. As this is a decolonial project, I also foreground Indigenous perspectives through my analysis of several interviews I conducted with Hawaiian sovereignty activist/protectors who have traveled to the Philippines. In terms of autoethnography, I incorporate self-critique of my family's relationship to U.S. empire in Hawai'i, the Philippines, and the Middle East. As colonial violence is deeply gendered, I also attend to how agendas of decolonization intersect with visions of gender and sexual liberation, reflecting on some of my own work as a theater artist and demilitarization activist.

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INTRODUCTION

‘A‘ole a‘e kau i ka pūlima
Ma luna o ka pepa o ka ‘ēnemi
Ho‘ohui ‘āina kū‘ai hewa
I ka pono sivila a‘o ke kanaka

No one will fix a signature
To the paper of the enemy
With its sin of annexation
And sale of native civil rights

‘A‘ole mākou a‘e minamina
I ka pu‘u kālā o ke aupuni
Ua lawa mākou i ka pōhaku
I ka ‘ai kamaha‘o o ka ‘āina

We do not value
The government’s sums of money
We are satisfied with the stones
Astonishing food of the land

— Eleanor Wright Kekoaohiwaikalani Prendergast, “Kaulana Nā Pua,” 1893

As a member of the International Council of the Sovereign Kingdom of the ‘Ohana O Hawai‘i, a group of non-Hawaiians who support the group’s quest for an independent Hawai‘i, I favor a secessionist model for several reasons. I firmly believe that Hawaiian sovereignty holds the best promise for uplifting the conditions of the Hawaiian people in particular and for managing the islands’ resources as a whole.

— Johnny Isidro M. Verzon, “One Filipino’s Case for Hawaiian Sovereignty,” 1996

For Filipin@s in Hawai‘i interested in our ancestors’ commitment to Hawaiian sovereignty, few stories spark the anticolonial imagination like the origins of “Kaulana Nā Pua” (“Famous are the Flowers/Children”). Also known as “Mele Aloha ‘Āina” (“Love for the Land” Song) and the “Stone-Eating Song,” “Kaulana Nā Pua” was written in February 1893, less than a month after the overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani. Many sources verify that Eleanor Wright Kekoaohiwaikalani Prendergrast, the celebrated Hawaiian¹ poet and songwriter, wrote the song at the behest of the Royal Hawaiian Band who famously approached her saying, “We will be

loyal to Liliu. We will not sign the haole's paper, but will be satisfied with all that is left to us, the stones, the mystic food of our native land" (Damon 317, qtd. in Stillman 89). The oft-quoted lyrics in the third and fourth stanza (see above epigraph) reflect these powerful images of a people remaining steadfast against U.S. imperialism and capitalism. The band requested Prendergast to write the song after the provisional government demanded they sign an oath of loyalty; all but two refused. Instead the musicians defected and started their own 40-piece band loyal to the queen.² Citizens of the kingdom – both Kānaka Maoli and their supporters – used multiple methods of protest (petitions, newspaper articles, performance, even quilting) to oppose the occupation. It was in this tumultuous and uncertain time – after the 1893 overthrow but before the annexation in 1898 – that “Kaulana Nā Pua” was written.

Few people know that this most cherished Hawaiian protest song represents a Filipin@-Hawaiian collaboration. The Royal Hawaiian Band was then headed by Jose Sabas Libornio, a prolific composer and saxophonist affectionately known as “Professor Libornio.” While there is some debate over whether Libornio is the composer or arranger of the song,³ one thing is certain: Libornio was a Manila-born citizen of the kingdom who strongly opposed the U.S. takeover. According to Amy Ku‘uleialoha Stillman, Libornio was a close friend of the royal family, and was likely present on the night Prendergast wrote the song (93). He composed at least ten other royalist compositions including “Mai Poina ‘Oe Ia‘u” (“Do Not Forget Me”) and “Queen Lili‘uokalani March.” He also led the efforts to tour the band as an act of protest against the provisional government, traveling to San Francisco, Boston, Los Angeles, Kansas City and Denver to build support for the queen (Stillman 90, “4 pp. Booklet,” “Colorado Portrait”). What’s extraordinary from a Filipin@ perspective is that Libornio did all of this work on behalf of Hawaiian sovereignty while the Katipunan forces were engaged in their own revolutionary

war against Spain, and then later against the United States. In other words, before the Philippines had won recognition of their national sovereignty, Libornio was using his talents to guard Hawaiian sovereignty against U.S. imperialism. Like Franz Fanon in Algeria many decades later, Libornio was what Haunani-Kay Trask terms a settler of color in a second colonial context who was determined to make a contribution to help the anti-imperialist struggle in his new home.⁴

While this dissertation is focused on anti-imperialist contributions by Filipin@s in Hawai‘i from the 1990s to the present, I begin with Libornio’s story because his unique life speaks powerfully to questions of (de)colonization and kuleana (rights, responsibilities, and authority) for contemporary Filipin@s in Hawai‘i in several respects. First, he immigrated to Hawai‘i during the kingdom era and quickly established himself as a musician and conductor, a rare occurrence considering the vast majority of Filipin@s in Hawai‘i arrived as *sakadas* (contract laborers) after 1906. He was not a Native Hawaiian by genealogy, but he was a Hawaiian national citizen of the kingdom.⁵ Second, he defended the authority of Queen Lili‘uokalani, a Kanaka Maoli woman leader, against the interests of the American businessmen orchestrating the coup. In doing so, he became Hawai‘i’s first and most famous *anti-imperialist* Filipin@. Third, Libornio, along with other members of the Royal Hawaiian Band, brought the idea of a protest song to Prendergast, who as a Kanaka Maoli was impacted most acutely by the theft of ancestral land. He did not hesitate to initiate this collaboration, and he worked tirelessly to demonstrate his solidarity through music even when traveling outside of Hawai‘i. Fourth, after touring the U.S. in support of the queen, he went to Lima where he spent the rest of his life, and wrote many still beloved compositions including “Marcha de Banderas” (March of Flags), a song he wrote in collaboration with the national government, and widely considered Peru’s second national anthem. He may have been an influence on the national anthems of Dominican Republic

and Colombia as well (“Legacy of Jose Sabas Libornio Ibarra”). While these songs may not have been written in a time marked with the same urgency as “Kaulana Na Pua,” they were written as to celebrate these still newly formed nations that had endured centuries of colonial rule under the Spanish. Libornio’s actions place him in an underresearched and under-theorized genealogy of transnational Filipin@s settlers acting in solidarity with global south leaders across the Pacific and the Americas.

I began the research for this dissertation eager to find other anti-imperialist Filipin@s in Hawai‘i’s history, or at least acts of solidarity with Indigenous struggle on the page and in the world. For me this was an important way to balance the historical and artistic record. While there is ample textual evidence that Filipin@s – my family included – arrived in Hawai‘i eager to prove our allegiance to the U.S. as new and easily deportable immigrants on American soil, increasingly Filipin@s settlers – scholars, activists, and artists – articulate themselves in terms that put the U.S. occupation in a critical light. I soon realized this awareness had been growing since the Hawaiian Renaissance of the 1970s. In 2014, I met Pangasinan-born community activist and educator Johnny Verzon at Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea, a celebration of Hawaiian sovereignty held every summer in Honolulu’s Thomas Square Park as well as on Hawai‘i Island. I was on a panel in one of the discussion tents on the aftermath of 1898, where I discussed my activism with Decolonial Pin@ys and Women’s Voices, Women Speak, two Honolulu-based demilitarization organizations that both support Hawaiian sovereignty. Afterwards, legendary sovereignty activist Auntie Terri Keko‘olani, who was being honored that year and whom I interview in Chapter Two, introduced the two of us. Verzon was the person whom Auntie Peggy Ha‘o Ross had approached to join the Hawaiian sovereignty movement as a result of his commitment to Filipin@ community struggles like Ota Camp and Operation Manong.⁶ He agreed, eventually representing

‘Ohana O Hawai‘i at the World Court in Geneva in 1980, writing articles on why Filipin@s should support Hawaiian sovereignty (see above epigraph), and designing a public high school curriculum for students to be more properly informed about the sovereignty struggle of the Hawaiian people.⁷ Verzon’s contributions, like Libornio’s, stand as a powerful contradiction to hegemonic histories that aim to erase or minimize the role of U.S. empire in shaping the Philippines, Hawai‘i, and the migration flows in between the two. My primary aim in writing this dissertation is to highlight and celebrate this anti-imperialist legacy of Filipin@s in Hawai‘i among artists, activists, and other community leaders. An equally important aim has been to theorize how decolonizing gender and sexuality is intrinsic to a sovereign Hawai‘i as well.

Perfect Americans, Imperfect Allies

It is easy to understand why many Filipin@ settlers in Hawai‘i often narrate their arrival as “coming to America.” Statehood for Hawai‘i was declared in 1959, and anyone wishing to go to Hawai‘i, including Filipin@s, must go through the U.S. bureaucracy to obtain a visa. Statehood renewed Hawai‘i as a destination for immigrants, and the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act further removed barriers for newcomers. As of the 2010 U.S. census, Filipin@s are rapidly migrating and now comprise between 15% and 25% of Hawai‘i’s population, either as “race alone” or “race in combination,” respectively (“Table 6”).⁸ In many official commemorative documents by “Filipin@ Americans” in Hawai‘i, these changes are interpreted as increasing opportunities for immigrants (and Hawai‘i itself) to participate in America’s great democracy.

In one key example from 1981, Justice Benjamin E. Menor began his speech entitled “The Role that Filipin@s played in Democratization in Hawai‘i” with the following: “On this

75th anniversary of Filipino immigration to Hawai‘i, I pay tribute to the immigrant American because in a real sense, he was our pioneer and it is to him that Hawai‘i’s commemorative activities have been essentially directed” (1). Here Menor happily conflates Hawai‘i with America, and immigration with democratization. The language of “pioneer” recalls a discourse of settler adventure in an empty land full of promise and opportunity. Judge Menor’s Americanized framework demonstrates that at least among the educated and professional classes, few have had access to histories that explain why the U.S. presence in Hawai‘i is controversial.

However, Kānaka Maoli have been steadily disrupting this mainstream narrative of a “peaceful” “transition” to American rule, arguing that Hawai‘i has been under illegal occupation since the overthrow of their constitutional monarchy in 1893. Since that time, Kānaka Maoli have used multiple strategies to regain their land and assert their self-determination. Since the Hawaiian Renaissance of the late 1960s, there has been a significant rise in political resistance against military occupation especially the live fire training on Kaho‘olawe, Mākua Valley, and Pōhakuloa. The Hawaiian Sovereignty movement has also been characterized by revitalization of language and culture, for example, Pūnana Leo Hawaiian Language Immersion schools have been instrumental in reviving the Hawaiian language, just as the Hokule‘a has revived the art of Polynesian voyaging in Hawai‘i. Hawaiian self-determination has also been articulated in terms of food sovereignty that requires the protection of water rights and farmland; the struggle at Nā Wai ‘Ehā on Maui and Waiāhole-Waikāne on O‘ahu are just two examples. Hawaiians have also prioritized the protection of sacred sites, especially Mauna Kea on Hawai‘i island and Haleakalā on Maui, both of which face the threat of desecration from foreign and military-funded telescopes. The protection of iwi kupuna (ancestral bones) has also made serious gains in Hawai‘i; developers must now defend their projects to one of five burial councils to make sure

that laws are being followed. In short, the success and visibility of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement(s) has increased pressure on all non-Hawaiians to redefine what justice in Hawai‘i should look like. Moreover, the success and visibility of Indigenous movements like those in the Philippines, Standing Rock, and elsewhere have increased global awareness of the role of genocide / population collapse for many “first world” economies, and how this “logic of elimination” must end to secure truly sustainable futures. In this vein, many contemporary Filipin@s, especially writers, activists, and other community leaders, see the need to re-evaluate our own position in the islands, how we represent the islands, and how we envision justice in a truly decolonized Hawai‘i.

Twin Annexations: Our Shared Trauma of 1898

I declare such a treaty [U.S. treaty of Annexation] to be an act of wrong toward the native and part-native people of Hawai‘i, an invasion of the rights of the ruling chiefs, in violation of international rights both toward my people and toward friendly nations with whom they have made treaties, the perpetuation of the fraud whereby the constitutional government was overthrown, and, finally, an act of gross injustice to me.

— Queen Lili‘uokalani of Hawai‘i, 1897

I solemnly protest in the name of God, the root and the fountain of all justice, and of all right, and who has given to me the power to direct my dear brothers in the difficulty against this intrusion of the Government of the United States in the sovereignty of these islands.

— President Emilio Aguinaldo of the Philippines, 1899

While there is plenty of evidence that many Filipin@s in Hawai‘i have directed their energies to serve the interests of the settler state, the title of this dissertation (“Emergent Allies”) gestures to the decolonial potential Filipin@s have to ally themselves with Kānaka Maoli. We might be considered natural allies given the many historical connections that were inaugurated in the late 19th century, and the ongoing violence of that imperial legacy. As the above epigraphs suggest, Queen Lili‘uokalani and President Aguinaldo faced a common dilemma and a common foe in 1898. While only the Philippines would go to war with the U.S., the result of America’s Pacific expansion would be devastating for both. The defeat of the Spanish empire in 1898 marked a new age when the United States’ imperialist ambition went overseas, extending beyond the North American continent into both the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.⁹ In that decisive year, Guåhan, the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Cuba fell to U.S. control via military force. Hawai‘i had enjoyed its sovereign status as a nation for almost all of the 19th century, having signed treaties with over a dozen countries including the United States (Chock 464). The nation that emerged in 1898 after finally defeating 300 years of Spanish colonialism was optimistic for its long-awaited independence, as were Guåhan, Cuba and Puerto Rico.

But to the Americans, these nations were not sovereign entities but the rightful spoils of war, to be bought from Spain for \$20 million as was decided by the two colonial powers in the Treaty of Paris. While Hawai‘i was not part of the deal, the U.S. annexed the kingdom that same year also as a convenient coaling station for its two wars in the Philippines, and later, its wars in Asia and the Pacific. Thus Hawaiian land helped to launch the military conquest of the Philippines, and war in the Philippines provided the pretext for annexation of Hawai‘i. Later, in 1906, the war-ravaged Philippine colony became an easy site to recruit contract laborers for U.S. plantations in Hawai‘i; given their colonial status Filipin@s were not subject to Asian exclusion

laws. In this way, Filipin@ labor fueled the intensification of plantation capitalism that displaced Indigenous farming and traditional land use in Hawai‘i. In short, Filipin@ and Hawaiian relationship to U.S. empire are very much linked.

In addition to these historical connections, Filipin@s and Kānaka Maoli might be considered natural allies given the institutionalized racism and stereotyping that affects both groups in contemporary Hawai‘i today. In many ways the racial discrimination and wage inequality that defined plantation life continues into the present. In his study of the 2000 census data on education, income, and occupation, Jonathan Okamura points out that “Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans and Whites continue to be the dominant groups in the ethnic stratification order, while Native Hawaiians and Filipino Americans continue to occupy subordinate positions” (qtd. in Fujikane, “Introduction” 23). Jonathan Okamura has argued strongly against the mythology of Hawai‘i as a harmonious racial melting pot, pointing to how Filipin@s, Hawaiians, Sāmoans and Micronesians face barriers in underfunded schools where drop out rates are as high as 29%, resulting in their over representation in low-wage jobs, the military, and prison (Okamura, *Ethnicity and Inequality* 70). Institutional racism makes its mark on the bodies and minds of Filipin@s and Hawaiians who suffer disproportionately from cardiovascular disease, hypertension, poorly controlled diabetes, smoking, depression, and teen suicide attempts (Look et al. 10- 12, 16; Aczon-Armstrong 42; Goebert et al. 1285). Such numbers further attest to the ongoing legacy and interconnectedness of U.S. colonialisms, and the complex task for activists and artists to expose and resist both the subordinated status of Filipin@s and Hawaiians and the ongoing legacy of (neo)colonial occupation shaping the lives of both peoples.

There are many contemporary writers who have taken up this challenge to unpack Filipin@ positionality in Hawai‘i’s settler colonial context. For example, O‘ahu-based Ilokana Shannon Cristobal said in a 2015 interview with *Hawai‘i Review* about her writing in that volume: “These poems...are informed by my struggles with living in the diaspora, reclaiming and reconnecting with my cultural heritage. It is about being able to situate myself as a non-invasive settler in support of Hawaiian rights and sovereignty. Thus, I am constantly negotiating my insider/outsider position not only from a Filipino perspective but also as a local and as an American” (Revilla 13). Cristobal unpacks her multilayered identifications (Hawai‘i –born local, diasporic Filipina, and U.S. citizen) that sit alongside her positionality as a settler on Indigenous land. In doing so, she denaturalizes the discourses of U.S. benevolence, multiculturalism and civil rights that have shaped Hawai‘i’s historiography, even Filipin@ American historiography in Hawai‘i. Cristobal’s careful articulation exemplifies the political balancing act for decolonial Filipin@ settlers in Hawai‘i. On the one hand, we want to affirm our undersung cultural heritage in a society where “the curse of being Filipino” still persists, while at the same time paying attention to the discourses of Americanism that render native struggle irrelevant or a barrier to democratic progress.¹⁰ Her work, like Libornio’s, highlights the importance of cultural production in articulating new subjectivities and imagining futures beyond the imperialist settler state.

Colonizing Gender and Sexuality

The Philippines and Hawai‘i are important sites to explore how colonization has always already been a project about gender and sexuality. Through the state and the church, Western colonialism imposed heteropatriarchal norms with aim of destroying Indigenous and other non-

Christian ways of life. The Philippines has its own feminist/queer tradition of babaylan spiritual / political leaders that scholars agree posed a major threat to the Spanish invasion that began in 1521.¹¹ Similarly, 19th century American missionaries and capitalists were threatened by the many female Hawaiian political leaders they encountered including Queen Lili‘uokalani, Ka‘ahumanu, Emma and Princess Ruth Ke‘elikōlani. In an effort to justify its overseas annexations, the U.S. circulated racist cartoons of President Aguinaldo and Queen Lili‘uokalani as savage “pickaninnies” unfit for self-government, images that were often demeaning in terms of gender. Aguinaldo was sometimes caricatured as a dancing girl; Lili‘uokalani was depicted as a joke or a tyrant, and far less “civilized” than Euro-American ideal of feminine domesticity (Ignacio). Importantly, during the U.S. colonial period of the Philippines (1899-1946) and the territorial period of Hawai‘i (1893-1959), Washington appointed governors who were all white, heterosexual men. U.S. militarization of both sites brought an increase in rape, sex trafficking, and abandoned children.¹² In Hawai‘i, the infamous 1932 Massie Affair exposed how U.S. military occupation is synonymous with a sexualized paranoia of men of color, resulting in the state-sanctioned murder of a young Kanaka Maoli man, Joe Kahahawai.¹³ Americanization of both the Philippines and Hawai‘i – long touted as a process of democratization – brought opportunities to expand white hetero-male freedom at all levels: economic, political, and sexual.

As empire impacts both land and bodies, gender and sexuality have become indispensable analytics. My dissertation pays close attention to the connection between land struggle and the liberation of women and gender minorities. Haunani-Kay Trask’s 1993 “Lovely Hula Hands: Corporate Tourism and the Prostitution of Hawaiian Culture,” is easily the most often quoted Kanaka Maoli essay ever written. Here Trask examines how U.S. corporate tourism “pimps” all sacred aspects of Hawaiian culture, especially hula and aloha, leading many around the world to

believe that “Hawai‘i, like a lovely woman, is there for the taking” (144). Trask celebrates the way Hawaiian women have combated this discursive and material violence by taking leadership in the movements for both national sovereignty and a Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP). As a poet and organic intellectual of the Hawaiian Sovereignty movement, Trask’s exemplifies the scholarly intersection between art and activism that animates my project. More recently, Lisa Kahaleole Hall theorizes a Hawaiian feminism that is rooted in Indigenous Pacific intellectual traditions while also nourished by Native American, African American and other women of color feminisms. Like Trask, Hall draws attention to the ongoing destructive power of Christianity and capitalism in disrupting traditional Kanaka Maoli expressions of gender and sexuality. Unlike Trask, Hall unambiguously embraces the word “feminist,” even advocating for a “feminist decolonization project” (31). I position my research in this genealogy of feminist decolonization, one that foregrounds Hawai‘i as an important site of struggle against U.S. empire, and that foregrounds Hawaiian feminism or *mana wahine* as indispensable tools for genuine decolonization to occur.¹⁴

My intervention is feminist in that at several points I direct attention to gendered stereotypes and oppression as they uniquely impact women. From my work as a demilitarization activist and scholar, I know this work is still vitally needed to address the gendered harms facing women as a result of war, colonial occupation, patriarchy, and militarization. However, as my opening tribute to Jose Libornio suggests, I also celebrate, interrogate, and eulogize the works and words of those who do not identify as women. Militarization quite obviously oppresses men and gender minorities also, especially those who are poor, of color, and under occupation. In the first two chapters that focus on decolonial alliances between Filipin@s and Hawaiians, I emphasize the work of many artists and activists, most of them women, who challenge imperial

heteropatriarchy with transnational and intersectional analysis. In the last two chapters, my attention turns other kinds of subjects that are not necessarily construed as “women’s issues”: the tortured Iraqi male prisoner made to do gay sex acts, young Filipino men from Hawai‘i seduced by imperial masculinities, the working-class Filipina from Hawai‘i soldier who dies a month into her tour in Iraq, the Filipina viciously murdered outside the illegal military base by a transmisogynist Marine, and the male Lumad (Indigenous Filipin@) leader gunned down by corporate mining interests. In this way, my vision to gender justice is woven throughout, sometimes in the direction of feminism or mana wahine, and other times in a more inclusive direction to liberate all of us from the violence of the gender binary.

Archive

This focus of this dissertation is Filipin@s in Hawai‘i and changing contestations with U.S. imperialism in the contemporary period (1990-2015). My archive includes English print culture, oral history interviews, and autoethnography. As this is a cultural studies project, I include both literary and nonliterary sources. Plays and poetry serve a primary role in terms of traditional literary texts, as I have found these to be the most promising genres for analyzing decolonial alliances in this period. Organizing by genre highlights the way these diasporic Filipin@ artists alternatively obey and disobey the rules of genre, as well as the community-level expectations for those artists creating work “by and for” the Filipin@ community. I also include one government report on torture, an interview with the author of that government report, one documentary, newspaper articles, fiction, and commemorative documents. I investigate how Filipin@ writers, community leaders and activists in Hawai‘i have narrated their history as a community, how these stories intersect with the history of the land, and how these narratives

demonstrate their negotiation with American empire itself. I pay particular attention to the influence of Hawaiian sovereignty movements on these contributions, but I also investigate the way texts resist anti-Indigenous racism, torture, war, (trans)misogyny, and global capitalism. As this is a decolonial project, I also foreground Indigenous perspectives through my analysis of several interviews I conducted with Kānaka Maoli activist/protectors who have traveled to the Philippines. While the interviews might out of the ordinary, I conceive of my dissertation as a kind of gathering of speech acts, both literary and activist, so interviews provided me a way to document decolonial alliances from a Hawaiian point of view. The interviews also allowed me to capture a range of perspectives on this important topic, which had yet been made public. In terms of autoethnography, I incorporate self-critique of my own family's relationship to U.S. empire in Hawai'i, the Philippines and the Middle East. As colonial violence is deeply gendered, I also attend to how agendas of decolonization intersect with visions of gender and sexual liberation, using some of my own reflections working as a theater artist and demilitarization activist.

The early motivation for this work comes out of my Master's project on English-language Filipino newspapers in the pre-statehood period in Hawai'i. Through discourse analysis I note the way that the newspaper editors and writers seemed never to register the contradiction between celebrating independence for the Philippines in 1946, only to extol the agenda of non-independence (through Statehood) for Hawai'i in 1959. In other words, these newspapers, much like those in the mainstream press, served to celebrate, rather than challenge, the march toward Statehood. I argued that the papers presented a distinctively non-*sakada* version of Americanized Hawai'i, articulated in English, and made visual through bourgeois material culture and beauty pageant aesthetics. Rather than highlighting the commonalities between Hawaiian and Filipino colonization by the United States, citizen-readers were

encouraged to depend on a haole translation of Hawaiian culture and to naturalize the hegemony of haole male political elite in the settler state. In this way, any anticolonial solidarity between Filipin@s and Hawaiians was rendered nearly impossible or irrelevant.

With this project, I turn to the contemporary period, from the 1990s to 2015. This era is marked by several historical milestones including the 100-year anniversary of the overthrow in 1993; the election of Hawai'i's first Filipin@ American governor in 1994; the 100-year anniversary of the Philippine revolution; the 100-year anniversary of the multiple annexations in 1998 (including Philippines and Hawai'i); and the 100-year anniversary of the *sakadas*' arrival to Hawai'i in 2006. This period also inaugurates the wars on/of terror and the attendant rise in mass surveillance, racialized torture, and deportation. I approached my archive with attention to the historical circumstances within which they were produced, the historical echoes of Filipin@ anti-colonial history, and the decolonial futures these artists, writers, and community leaders envision.

My archive is undoubtedly selective. I do not include Ilokano materials or those written in other Filipin@ languages due to my limited language abilities.¹⁵ I include some works written in pidgin (Hawai'i Creole English), but this is not a major focus of my study. One could argue that in an era of mass surveillance, writing in languages other than English is a key anti-colonial technique that should never be ignored. I acknowledge the vital importance of such work and I wish to encourage much more scholarship in and on Filipin@ heritage language texts, particularly those from Hawai'i. Despite these limitations, I argue Filipin@s' relationship to the English language has been and remains an important site of scholarship as well. While English has been an instrument of colonization in the Philippines and Hawai'i, it is also a powerful tool of decolonization. As I will show, these writers used English print media to reach a multilingual

Filipin@ community, and invite them to feel included in a particular version of Filipin@ identity with a particular – though dynamic and changing – relationship with the U.S./empire. In this way, the use of English is part of the performance and the interpellation, and a key rhetorical device worthy of investigation.

It is important to distinguish what this dissertation is not. First, it is not a comprehensive account of all Filipin@ literary and political expression in Hawai‘i or even all anti-imperialist expression. Any attempt to do so would inevitably fall short as Filipin@ communities in Hawai‘i are too large and too diverse in terms of language, immigration status, generation, class, and other factors. Second, I do not aim to measure anti-colonial solidarity by some arbitrary standard. As I will show, sovereignty, occupation, colonization, kuleana, ea are contested terms in Hawai‘i, so it makes sense that decolonial allyship and solidarity is equally complex. My research explores the tensions that arise as (neo)colonized people settle onto other colonized people’s lands, and how the machinations of the larger imperial project become exposed. I track what political and intellectual expression became possible given specific historical pressures and opportunities. I aim to make this work useful to both scholars and activists in Hawai‘i, where these questions have taken on particular urgency.

Intersecting Settler Colonial Studies in Hawai‘i and Filipin@ Literary/Cultural Studies

My project intervenes at the intersection of two primary modes of inquiry: settler colonial studies and Filipin@ American literary and cultural studies, with strong emphasis on the way feminist analytics intersect both. Settler colonial studies has been credited with centralizing Indigenous critiques of empire and debunking neoliberal multiculturalist historiography. Haunani-Kay Trask’s work on settler colonialism has been instrumental with regard to theorizing

Hawai‘i as a site of Asian settler colonialism. In her seminal 2000 essay, “Settlers of Color and ‘Immigrant’ Hegemony: ‘Locals’ in Hawai‘i” she writes:

Today, modern Hawai‘i, like its colonial parent the United States, is a settler society. Our Native people and territories have been overrun by non-Natives, including Asians. Calling themselves “local,” the children of Asian settlers greatly outnumber us. They claim Hawai‘i as their own, denying Indigenous history, their long collaboration in our continued dispossession, and the benefits therefrom. (2)

Trask’s attention to settler historiography here is critical for Filipin@s in Hawai‘i who have also participated in the erasure of Indigenous historical trauma, including the overthrow itself.¹⁶ Trask puts pressure on middle-class settlers in particular, drawing attention to the way educational attainment and class ascension further cement loyalty to the American colonial occupation.

Trask’s framework was central for Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Okamura’s landmark volume, *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai‘i* that opened the door for Asian settlers to interrogate their own communities’ actions more deeply.

I put my work in this genealogy in that I too am interested in the drawing attention to how Asian settlers –Filipin@s included – have been complicit in furthering American colonialism and occupation in Hawai‘i. While undoubtedly there are very significant intra-settler distinctions, it is useful to interrogate how Filipin@s, regardless of class, contribute to the minoritization and marginalization of Hawaiians on Hawaiian land. Today Filipin@s are the second largest ethnic group in Hawai‘i, greatly outnumbering Kānaka Maoli in the census, in the voting booth and in the legislature.¹⁷ Some Filipin@s have entered the middle class¹⁸ and enjoy much greater political power than ever before, especially considering the 1994 and 1998 elections of Ben Cayetano (the first governor of Filipin@ descent) which many hailed as evidence Filipin@s had

“arrived,” no longer just (exploitable, uneducated) *sakadas*, but ready to claim their role as full-fledged American citizens. For these reasons, it is important to include, Filipin@s in the analysis of settler complicity.

My dissertation expands on the work of Dean Saranillio who argues in his ground-breaking essay “Colonial Amnesia: Rethinking Filipin@ ‘American’ Settler Empowerment in the U.S. Colony of Hawai‘i” that Filipin@s, long blinded to their own colonial history, often use U.S. narratives of “nation of immigrants” to empower themselves in the settler state. Like Saranillio, I am interested in the contours of this “colonial amnesia” in Filipin@ self-narration, as well as how Filipin@s have rendered Kānaka Maoli invisible or irrelevant, and why that is a problem. While Saranillio gestures to those acts of solidarity that connect the military occupations of both the Philippines and Hawai‘i, for example the 2003 Statement by 10 Filipinas, “Filipinas Stand in Solidarity with Native Hawaiians in Opposing United States Military Expansion,” he pays primary attention to those moments when colonized/occupied people employ strategies that erase each other’s struggles. While I am interested in structural analysis that diagnoses the problem (capitalism, settler colonialism and patriarchy), I extend his analysis to investigate the role of Filipin@ settler allies’ literary and cultural production. In short, my research investigates those moments when settlers affirm Indigenous self-determination and perhaps even outmaneuver settler colonial logics and institutions. As with the 2003 statement, I consider how the demilitarization efforts of Kanaka Maoli and Filipina women offer an important site of decolonial possibility.

Over the last few years, scholars on settler colonialism in Hawai‘i have taken more seriously the complex position of settlers who have their own struggles with U.S. imperialism and global capitalism. More emphasis is being placed on exposing the role of empire in shaping

migration flows and considering how multiculturalism might be recuperated from a progressive/pro-independence point of view. Part of this is a shift has included more discussion of the multiethnic nature of Hawaiian kingdom era citizenship. Kānaka Maoli were not the only ones who lost their queen in 1893. Jon Kamakawiwo‘ole Osorio writes:

That nation, the Hawaiian Kingdom, was a multiethnic constitutional monarchy that treated with dozens of nations, and whose laws, at least until 1887, acknowledged that citizenship and civil rights were not related in any way to race. Restoration of the Hawaiian Kingdom has garnered more and more support over the past decade because it acknowledges the rights of nations under international law, and because it does not lead to the destruction of relationships among friends and families because of race.

(“Hawaiian Issues” 18)

In this light, emphasis is placed on the multiethnic citizenry (“Hawaiian nationals”) who had the concept of race imposed on them through Americanization. In many of these articulations, the usefulness of the settler/Indigenous distinction is acknowledged, but is not necessarily the primary intervention.¹⁹

Increasingly Indigenous scholars in Hawai‘i, particularly women, have turned to a discussion of the *practices* that can dismantle settler colonialism. A key task for many of these scholars is defining and exemplifying what Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua’s terms “settler kuleana,” in other words, inspiring people to embrace a sense of responsibility to land even if they are not genealogically connected to it. In *The Seeds We Planted, Portraits of a Native Hawaiian Charter School*, Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua also uses the term “settler aloha ‘āina,” i.e. a love for the land, which she argues can and should be cultivated by settlers in order to help “rebuild Indigenous structures that allow for the transformation of settler-colonial relations” (154).²⁰ Of

course settlers do not have the same relationship to Hawai‘i given the specific traumas the ‘Ōiwi have experienced, especially land theft, but settlers must join efforts to restore Indigenous land and cultural practices. Determining one’s kuleana on specific ‘āina requires “deep self-reflection,” regular questioning in partnership with ‘Ōiwi and others who share the same commitment to ‘āina, and listening to the land itself (154).

In *The Value of Hawai‘i II*, Aiko Yamashiro and Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua argue that given the serious problems Hawai‘i faces, and the fact that Kānaka Maoli cannot be expected to act alone to protect Hawai‘i’s fragile resources, everyone must invigorate our relationship to land and ‘āina-based movements to protect land and water. Similarly, in “Non-natives Need to Strive to be Non-invasive: Restoring Kalo and Community in He‘eia, Hawai‘i,” Hokulani Aikau explores how settlers and Indigenous people have distinct but complementary roles, and how our individual kuleana to ‘āina must be informed by our genealogy:

Kuleana as an ethical principle and practice allows us to acknowledge differences within the community while also establishing possibilities for solidarity. What kuleana offers is an understanding of individual responsibility that is fluid and relative while also holding the individual accountable to the ‘āina, communities, lāhui, and ancestors. Kuleana goes beyond neoliberal discourses that inform environmental conservation that lock nature and humans in an oppositional war. Rather kuleana is attentive to the particularity of place and to the ways in which individuals who are differentially positioned vis-a-vis land and ancestors are accountable based on that relationship. (Aikau 103)

These scholars emphasize that even as Kānaka Maoli are doing land-based restoration projects in Hawai‘i they must take the time to build trust and abide by the protocol of specific ‘āina. At the

center of these discussions is a long-term commitment to build sustainable communities that have a humble and respectful relationship with land and water. My dissertation is motivated by this idea that settler-colonial relations can and must be transformed, and that decolonized Filipin@s in Hawai‘i – those who understand their own historical relationship to U.S. empire as well as that of Kānaka Maoli – can offer a unique and important perspective on decolonizing and de-occupying Hawai‘i.

Alongside the settler colonial studies, my work is also indebted to the field of Filipin@ literary and cultural studies, which has been defined as an umbrella term that encompasses the study of the Philippine nation, Filipin@ Americans, and/or the Filipin@ diaspora. Much of this scholarship has addressed the central role of U.S. war and (neo)colonialism in the formation of Filipin@ identity and the Philippines itself. I put my work in the genealogy of those scholars who employ empire as a key analytic, in contrast with those scholars who emphasize claiming America, immigrant pride, and staking rights as U.S. citizens. Foundational in this tradition is the work of Oscar Campomanes, who stresses the importance of theorizing Filipin@ literature and culture with U.S. imperial history at the center, rather than depending on a hyphenated immigrant American identity politics to theorize what he considers really to be an “exilic” Filipin@ experience. Campomanes reminds us that “Filipin@ Americans” were created in 1898 (the year of U.S. annexation), when the United States violently expanded its borders to conquer the Philippines, not when immigrant Filipin@s moved to the post-1946 borders of the United States. In an interview entitled “Filipinos, Filipino Americans, and U.S. Imperialism” Campomanes explains:

From the establishment of colonial government in the Philippines to the time of the Commonwealth, Filipin@s moved to the continental states not as nationals of

a sovereign nation but as *U.S. nationals* of a territory “appurtenant to” but considered as “belonging to” the United States. It is kind of like the movements of Puerto Ricans make now from the island to New York, or American Sāmoans or Guamanians to Hawai‘i or California, with their indeterminate status as neo-colonial Americans. Even with the postindependence period, “immigration” from the Philippines has to be seriously qualified by its undeniable neocolonial inflections. (41)

Campomanes’ analysis emphasizes how U.S. empire violently shaped new imperial geographies and migration flows, as well as identities of people, land, and literature. Understanding imperialism in the Philippines requires analysis of how Americanization of Filipin@s began with invasion, war and genocide, thus discrediting the discourse of debt and benevolence. This useful framework puts Filipin@ American literatures at the intersection of postcolonial and ethnic American literary studies. My dissertation builds on this tradition of analyzing diasporic Filipin@ literatures within this neo(colonial) context, noting the ways this history shapes and haunts texts in unexpected ways. For literatures produced by Filipin@s in Hawai‘i, who are doubly exposed to the colonial legacy of 1898, this history is twice as important to consider.

My analysis of anti-imperialist Filipin@s in Hawai‘i – particularly poets and playwrights – has been aided by several scholars of Filipin@ American performance. In her 2009 *The Decolonized Eye: Filipino American Art and Performance*, Sarita See asserts that empire’s coherence can actually be destabilized and disarticulated by Filipin@ American performers and visual artists. With a primary focus on 90s-era New Yorkers, See argues their performances and visual art defied U.S. “disavowal of imperialism” and Filipino American assimilation (xv). She writes: “There is precious little recognition of the variety and sophistication of the cultural forms

that have withstood the violence of American forgetting and that continue to proliferate in the 21st century. This book is for Filipino Americans, so that we can cherish both what has been bequeathed us and what we persist in inventing and envisioning” (xxxiv). Similarly, Neferti Tadiar’s 2009 *Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Makings of Globalization* examines closely the powerful role of Tagalog poetry in disrupting the flattened image of the global Filipin@ diaspora – often feminized, underpaid, and emptied of agency. Tadiar credits these poems, particularly those of Hawai‘i-based Ruth Mabanglo, with proffering hope and vision in ways the Philippines left could not. Like See and Tadiar, I understand my intervention as foregrounding a body of anti-imperialist Filipin@s whose work has been undertheorized, both by scholars of both Filipin@ literature and literatures of Hawai‘i.

My work also takes direction from those Filipin@ studies scholars that take a less celebratory posture. One important example is Theo Gonzalves’ 2009 *The Day the Dancers Stayed: Performing in the Filipino/American Diaspora*. Gonzalves examines both the potential and the limitations of the “Pilipino Cultural Night,” a performance phenomenon which has become fixture of Filipin@ community organizing on California college campuses. While the PCN has offered students a message of ethnic pride, Gonzalves argues it too often relies on dubious historiography, Orientalist tropes, and political conservatism. Similarly, Rod Labrador’s 2015 *Building Filipino Hawai‘i* considers how the Filipino Community Center performs both ethnic pride for a marginalized community and collaboration with the middle-class settler establishment. In these examples, scholars examine colonial amnesia as it applies to the colonial history of one’s own ethnic group; I focus on those decolonial artists who demonstrate awareness of Indigenous struggle in connection with their own. For example, in my first chapter, I use the term “emergent solidarity” to describe the anti-imperialist impulse in plays by Jovita Rodas

Zimmerman and Troy Apostol, which both draw parallels between Filipin@s and Hawaiians and their ongoing struggle against U.S. occupation and (neo)colonialism.

Filipin@ scholars have made significant contributions theorizing the centrality of militarism in Philippine-American relations as well as in the Americanization of Filipin@ identities on both sides of the border. This has become all the more relevant with the “Asia/Pacific Pivot” which has resulted in increased militarization of both Hawai‘i and the Philippines. In *Securing Paradise: Tourism and Militarism in Hawai‘i and the Philippines*, Vernadette Gonzalez interrogates how entrenched U.S. military occupation remains in both the settler colony of Hawai‘i and the postcolony of the Philippines, normalizing itself through the alleged benevolence of tourism. Gonzalez reminds readers of the U.S. military’s long tradition of recruiting oppressed people to fight their wars for them, or “using Indians to catch Indians,” from 19th century frontier homicide, to the Macabebe scouts in Philippine American war, to the Aeta people in the U.S. Vietnam war (189). Similarly, in the 2012 *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of the Modern Filipina* Denise Cruz applies a careful analysis of the complex rhetorical maneuvers (“tight rope and triple talk”) employed by Colonel Yay Panlilio, who published her unforgettable memoir of the Philippine guerilla resistance with a mainstream American publisher in the aftermath of World War II. Their work reminds us we cannot envision demilitarized futures without accounting for militarization’s significant reach on land, people and politics. My work explores the complex positionality of militarized Filipin@ Americans from Hawai‘i like the infamous General Antonio Taguba, the outspoken critic of U.S. torture whose report and interview I interrogate in chapter three, as well as those less famous ones like Myla Maravillosa, slain Iraq war soldier and subject of elegist Darlene Rodrigues, whose work I discuss in chapter four. My dissertation theorizes a spectrum of anti-imperialist disruptions: from Taguba’s firmly

patriotic dissent against military torture to Rodrigues' radical, decolonial love for all living beings, including America's enemies.

At several points my project also interrogates the role of the nation-state in determining activist priorities, an important question from both Kanaka Maoli and diasporic Filipina feminist perspectives. There has been an anarchist turn among Indigenous scholars, to which Hawaiians feminists have made significant contributions. Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua's essay "Kuleana Lāhui: Collective Responsibility for Hawaiian Nationhood in Activists' Praxis" attends to the way a state-centered focus of Hawaiian sovereignty has drained the movement of mana (power) while not producing material gains for ordinary Kānaka Maoli. She builds on Taiaiake Alfred's concept of "anarcha-indigenism" to theorize practices of Kanaka Maoli self-determination that can be enacted in the present, practices which do not reproduce the violent exclusions based on gender, race and other identifications typified by nation-state citizenship. J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, a scholar activist who runs a radio program dedicated to anarchism, has critiqued the way LGBT movements in Hawai'i have employed Hawaiian cultural values and concepts like aloha, māhū, and aikāne to agitate for U.S.-style equal rights within the settler state, effectively invisibilizing Hawaiian land struggle. Kauanui rejects marriage as a goal for LGBT liberation, arguing it is a product of capitalist ownership totally foreign to Hawaiian traditions of valuing gender and sexual diversity (Kauanui, "Marriage"). Similarly, poly-queer Kanaka Maoli scholar Kahala Johnson theorizes a politics of "outlaw sovereignties" to put the futility of the settler state under interrogation while also critiquing social justice movements for their failure to include māhū and other gender queer individuals. Johnson draws on his own experiences with kū ki'ai mauna (protectors of the mountain) defending Haleakalā against desecration, and the discomfort he felt when the leadership decided to organize tasks according to a kane/wahine (male/female) binary,

thus re-inscribing colonial gender roles in the name of Hawaiian culture (Johnson). While there is great diversity among the Hawaiian sovereignty activist/protectors, my dissertation gives primary attention to these scholars whose anarcha-Indigenous politics are grounded in Hawaiian values of mana wahine and the liberation of māhū and other gender and sexual minorities.

As Hawaiian feminists have made significant contributions to indigena-anarchist critiques of the nation-state and Westphalian models of citizenship, Filipin@ feminist scholars have been credited for their contributions to critiques of the state via transnational citizenship. These critiques have been particularly useful in understanding how workers in diaspora negotiate both the dictates of the Philippine nation/state and their political subjectivity in the new places they reside. Filipin@ feminists also interrogate how state policy changes with regard to the gendered shift from a majority male migration of agricultural laborers to what is now a majority female migration of domestic workers who have become the face of globalization. Robyn Rodriguez considers the Philippines as a “labor brokerage state,” one that deliberately facilitates the mass export of Filipin@s to sell their labor across a vast global diaspora. The Philippine state markets migration as a patriotic norm, and casts overseas contract workers (OCWs) as the national heroes to save the economy. With a slightly different perspective, Rhacel Parreñas’ critiques the Philippine state’s moralistic and condescending assumptions that women labor migrants need protection; these efforts, she argues, only strengthen borders and limit mobility in ways that never applied to men. Parreñas centers the voices of Filipina women and *bakla* (Tagalog for transwomen or gay men) who have been politically muted by these policies that actually make poor migrants *more* vulnerable to traffickers. While my dissertation is more focused on the writings of long-term Filipin@ settlers, I still depend on these migration scholars

to contextualize the gendered dimensions of Filipin@ labor, citizenship, and political engagement.

Self-critique and settler colonial analytics

This introduction would not be complete without acknowledgement of my own genealogies, both ancestral and activist. I offer these reflections as a way of honoring my family as well as the many teachers and movements have shaped my thinking up to this point. As Dean Saranillio has pointed out, autoethnography – via self-critique – is also a necessary part of marking one’s positionality and unpacking settler colonial relations.²¹ And as Hokulani Aikau and Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua have also pointed out, it’s an important step in marking one’s kuleana in a particular place and time.

Growing up I didn’t have access to “Kaulana Nā Pua” or any resistance songs from the Philippines or Hawai‘i. While there were undoubtedly large Filipin@ and Hawaiian communities in Northern California in the 1970s, my parents were more occupied with finishing college and working, so I watched a lot of television. I learned every line of the ubiquitous jingle from the California and Hawai‘i Sugar Company TV commercial: “C&H, pure cane sugar, from Hawai‘i, sweet Hawai‘i growing in the sun!” I enjoyed the catchy tune and happy images of children – brown like me! – featured in their ads. The cane fields reminded me of my father’s hilarious tales about growing up in Kahuku, a plantation village on the North shore of O‘ahu. The logo and the jingle linked California and Hawai‘i in consensual harmony, just as they were linked in my family’s story. C&H was a “brand” that I felt proud to be affiliated with. Like most Americans, I considered sugar to be a staple food so it made sense that it should be grown in abundance as far

as the eye could see. Libornio might have considered pōhaku (rocks) “astonishing food of the land” but for me that food was sugar, and Hawai‘i was the natural place for America to grow it.²²

I came to understand a more complex portrait of the islands through my father’s lifelong ambivalence about his birthplace and the “plantation lifestyle” he grew up in. On the one hand, Hawai‘i still sets the standard for his idea of proper, civilized behavior: deep respect for all classes, cultures and accents, and generous amounts of food for all. In Kahuku, no one felt self-conscious about what they didn’t have because everyone made the same meager plantation wages. Life-long friendships and community bonds were cemented across ethnic and religious lines, especially during football season. His nostalgia for these aspects heightened as his career took us further and further away from the islands. At the same time, he was grateful to leave that place that left him feeling “brainwashed” by an elite oligarchy that dominated all aspects of island life, a problem that only accelerated post-statehood. Racial hierarchy left dark-skinned people at the bottom doing all the menial jobs my father was determined to avoid. The U.S. military provided the only noticeable path to make his dreams come true: travel, college, graduate school, family, and home ownership. My father decided that if America represented equality and freedom – however flawed – then his kids would get their share of that pie. He married my mother, daughter of a white Air Force family from Alabama, and resolved that she, too, would finish college despite, or maybe because of, warnings from her family against the match. My brother and I would never know the poverty that pushed his parents out of the Philippines or the exploitation that pushed him out of Hawai‘i. We would be Americans, with minimized hints of the “other” on our mixed race faces. The bad memories would be part of my father’s story, but he was determined they would not be part of ours.

The “brainwashing” my father received was also available in the American public schools my brother and I attended in California, Arizona, Utah, and eventually Alabama, where my family finally settled. From K-12, I attended over 10 schools, none of which provided any information on Indigenous / resistance stories of any of these places. I remember hearing about Manifest Destiny, but not as it applied to the Philippines or Hawai‘i. I received little to no encouragement to explore my own genealogy or family history. My brother and I faced uncomfortable microaggressions from our white peers and family members who racialized us in a myriad of not so innocent ways. We had little vocabulary to explain U.S. empire and our family’s relationship to it. I understood perfectly what Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong’o meant when he said his colonial education taught him that his people’s history was “one wasteland of nonachievement” (3). I had been raised to fight racial injustice and discrimination, but like many other students of color I lacked ancestral knowledge of language, culture and history. I envied the African Americans I met at Spelman College in Atlanta, or really anyone who had easier access to their people’s stories of resistance. I had wild fantasies that if I had grown up in the Philippines or Hawai‘i, places where “brown people” were the majority, I would have had access to more culturally relevant education and endure fewer racial hang ups. In short, through high school and college, my guiding analytics were U.S. multiculturalism/civil rights on the domestic front, and U.S. containment/anti-war movement on the foreign policy front, without a strong understanding of the imperial logic that bifurcates these spheres.

Whatever awareness I have of Kanaka Maoli struggle and other movements for Indigenous sovereignty occurred thanks to several experiences I had after moving back to California as a young adult. For each of these I am deeply indebted. In 1993, I heard Haunani-Kay Trask speak in Berkeley to promote *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty*

in Hawai‘i. Trask helped me to understand the way my family told its story of racial uplift inside an Americanized Hawai‘i was a key settler colonial discourse that effectively served to erase Hawaiian national struggle. Our paths would cross again decades later in my first semester of graduate school when I took her Pacific Women’s Poetry class. In 1994, I heard J. Kēhaulani Kauanui and Lisa Kahaleole Hall speak at the Asian/Pacific Lesbian/Bisexual Network’s Women’s retreat, which I helped organize. Before showing *Ka Ho‘okolokolonui Kānaka Maoli*, a documentary on the Peoples’ International Tribunal, they held ceremony to honor the Awaswas, the Indigenous people on whose land we were gathering in Santa Cruz. They also made us aware of the insult and the erasure in our use of the term “API” to really mean “Asian American.” Their intervention taught me how settler erasures can occur in queer and progressive movements, as well as how movements can respond positively to honest and constructive critique. In 1999, my partner and I attended the Indigenous Women’s Health Network conference in Honolulu that began with a ceremony in which participants *asked Kānaka Maoli for permission to be on their land*. As this was a gathering of women, the ritual of asking for consent had profound feminist resonances, and there was not a dry eye in the room. I had been doing health education workshops in San Francisco that ended with coaching girls to shout the self-defense mantra: “My body belongs to ME!” But while witnessing this ritual, I was made aware of the connection between a people’s self-determination and personal/sexual self-determination. In other words, I learned then what is a central truism of Indigenous feminism: that the domination of bodies and land are inextricably linked.²² While the settler state cannot offer a path to sovereignty, moments of recognition and solidarity can nurture healing and strengthen our resistance.

Moving to Maui in 2002 challenged me to translate the “Filipino Americanism” I had learned on the continent to this new and very different context. The first noticeable difference

was the Filipin@ community lacked that “loud and proud” bravado I had grown accustomed to in San Francisco. Secondly, the Indigenous movement for self-determination and sovereignty was gaining momentum. Finding my footing required paying attention to both. In 2005, the syndicated cartoonist Corky Trinidad wrote an editorial summing up the problem of self-disguise among Filipin@s: “...Filipinos born in Hawai‘i, as soon as they reached the age of reason, and the Filipinos migrating from the Philippines, as soon as they left the airport, became Chinese-Spanish or Spanish-Chinese-Singaporean or Spanish-Portuguese-Basque or Chinese-American-Irish or some such combination.” R. Zamora Linmark captured the problem in his celebrated 1995 novel *Rolling the R’s* with the character of Nelson Ariola, the quintessential self-hating Filipin@ who insists on being identified as “American” – because “the only Filipino everyone knows is the Filipino that eats dogs or the Filipino that walks around with a broom in his hands” (11). This lack of pride – which might also be understood as a form of class arrogance toward the poor – translated into lack of advocacy and services and for a sizable number of people, especially vulnerable Filipin@s like the undocumented, the unemployed, the abused, and the incarcerated. I joined an ad hoc group of Filipina professionals and together we presented several cultural competency workshops for social service providers and educators that attracted hundreds of people, far more than we could accommodate. While imperfect, our workshops were celebrated as the first of their kind; one of the participants from Lana‘i, an island with 60 percent Filipin@ population, told me this was the first time he had been offered a Filipin@-focused training in his 18 years in the field of social work. It felt good to be contributing to the efforts to take Filipin@ issues – stereotyping, underemployment, violence – more seriously, but the political frameworks of multicultural inclusion on occupied land left much to be desired.

On Maui I was also exposed to multiple efforts of Kānaka Maoli to assert their cultural and political self-determination against what seemed like impossible odds. I helped start Talking Stories, a theater company focused on bringing local actors and local stories to Hawai‘i’s stages, through which I met many teachers or parents from the Hawaiian language immersion schools. I met kalo (taro) farmers and others committed to aloha ‘āina and land-based cultural resurgence. I learned also about Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana, the grassroots organization credited with stopping the naval bombing of the island, a bombing so powerful that it could be heard from Kīhei barely ten years before we moved there. I was exposed to projects to protect the declining watershed and learned how the plantation system had destroyed traditional Indigenous farming and ways of life. 1994 was the year Hawai‘i elected the first Filipin@ American governor Ben Cayetano, who was succeeded by Hawai‘i’s first female governor Linda Lingle in 2002. From the liberal political vantage point, these firsts represented an opening of racial and gender inclusion under American-style democracy, but I was more interested in the grassroots efforts of decolonial Filipin@s and Hawaiians to recognize each other’s struggles for dignity and self-determination. I rejected a framework of competing “immigrant rights” and “Indigenous rights” with the settler state as neutral arbiter, and tried to imagine a politics that decenters the settler state altogether, one that puts U.S. empire on trial for all its crimes against the sacredness of our land and bodies.

Part One: Decolonial Alliances

It is in this spirit that I have named the first part of the dissertation “Decolonial Alliances,” which includes two chapters organized with attention to both genre and political practice. I imagine these two chapters as creating a space of mutual recognition in which the

Philippines and Hawai‘i are put into the same framework of analysis. While U.S. empire would have colonized and racialized people forever casting their attention on the metropole, this section directs attention to how Filipin@s and Hawaiians represent each other. Chapter one features two Filipin@ playwrights who put our *colonizations* into conversation, and chapter two features the perspectives of Kanaka Maoli activist / protectors who put our *sovereignities* into conversation. In this way, this first section is a kind of call and response. However, I want to make clear that I don’t mean to suggest with this methodology that Kānaka Maoli should be required to learn the resistance histories of all the peoples who settle in their islands, even if they share the same colonizer. I maintain, though, that those Kānaka Maoli who have been to the Philippines have valuable lessons to teach. If Johnny Verzon’s vision of a “Filipino-Hawaiian” alliance were ever to become reality, the information that is provided in these interviews could be vital in strengthening solidarity efforts.

In chapter one, “Filipin@ Settler Kuleana: On the Page, on the Stage, and in the World,” I chart an emergent politics of solidarity in two plays: Jovita Rodas Zimmerman’s 1997 *Carmela* and Troy Apostol’s 2006 *Who the Fil-Am I?* Both of these texts were written “by and for” Filipin@s in Hawai‘i while still being attentive to the history of Kānaka Maoli struggle. I contextualize each play alongside two overlapping histories: the political priorities articulated by the Filipin@ community in Hawai‘i, alongside those of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement in these two important decades. The 1990s held the important centennial anniversaries of the overthrow, Philippine Revolution and the twin annexations of the Philippines and Hawai‘i. The 2000s were not quite as significant, but the sovereignty movement made important strides with regard to water rights. In the Filipin@ community, much energy was directed to commemorating the 2006 the centennial anniversary of the *sakadas*’ (contract workers) arrival to Hawai‘i. The

historical context points to those conditions of possibility for settler solidarity with Indigenous people to emerge. This chapter strongly draws on the work of Sarita See and Theo Gonzalves in theorizing the role of Filipin@ performance in critiquing American empire; at the same time I build on Dean Saranillio and Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua's work in theorizing how Filipin@s – like all settlers – must reflect on their *utang na loób* (debt of gratitude) or settler kuleana to the Indigenous people of 'āina on which they settle.

In the second chapter “Weaving Our Sovereignties Together: Maximizing Ea for Filipin@s and Hawaiians,” I analyze interviews I conducted with four Kanaka Maoli independence activists (Aunty Terri Keko'olani, Adam Keawe Manalo Camp, Kihei Nahale-a, and Puni Jackson) who traveled to the Philippines.²³ I explore the lessons they took from their time with Filipin@ activists and land protectors, and how that knowledge has nourished the movements for independence in Hawai'i today. Key in this chapter is uncovering the role of the state in how we theorize independence for either nation. As I will show, sovereignty is not a single thing for either the Philippines or Hawai'i, so linking the two is a complex, but worthwhile task. For those Filipin@s interested in linking our struggles for “sovereignty” or “ea” these contemporary movements offer an abundance of intellectual and activist opportunities for decolonization and deoccupation at both sites.

Part Two: Speaking Truth to Empire, Torture, and Endless War

The second part of the dissertation turns to discussion of Filipin@s in Hawai'i and critiques of U.S. imperialism in the post-9/11 era. As with part one, part two is organized with attention to genre and political practice, with one chapter analyzing a nontraditional text (in this case, a declassified government report on torture) and one chapter analyzing traditional literary

texts (in this case, poetry). Chapter three has a focus on the writing of a male military general; chapter four has a focus on women demilitarization activist-poets. Although extraordinarily different in terms of political orientation, I argue they share these things in common: they are writers who identify as Filipin@s from Hawai‘i whose works are embedded in communities of resistance. Put together they tell a story of a spectrum of genders and political actors using the tools available to them to expose U.S. empire, torture, and endless war.

In chapter three, “American Tutelage Gone Awry: Antonio Taguba, Filipin@ Americanism, and the Critique of Torture,” I consider the significance of the 2004 report on Abu Ghraib prison torture, written by the most renowned Filipin@ from Hawai‘i in this dissertation, Major General Antonio Taguba. His declassified report remains one of the most damning exposés of U.S. military human rights violations ever published. I include in the chapter my close reading of the report itself taking into account the multiple historical resonances with those Filipin@ bodies of a previous forgotten war who were also subject to torture methods like the “water cure” (now called “waterboarding”). I include also reflections from my personal interview with the man himself, and how the impact of the report far exceeds the intentions of its patriotic author. I examine how, despite critiquing America’s war crimes in the harshest terms, Taguba managed to remain a community hero in mainstream Filipin@ American community, even among veterans. I argue that his ongoing critique of torture and the military itself have helped to redefine what speech is politically possible by a *patriotic Filipin@ American from Hawai‘i*, a political subjectivity demarcated by an unique “double exposure” to hegemonic notions of U.S. benevolence and rescue.

In chapter four, “Mourning in Public: Filipina Activism in Hawai‘i and the Political Potential of Elegy,” I chart the artistic and political significance of three elegiac poems written

by contemporary diasporic Filipinas in Hawai‘i. I argue their poems are not just mourning the dead, but, to use Neferti Tadiar’s term, articulating a form of “radical bereavement” meant to rouse the living into fighting for justice. I end the dissertation with their work because I believe these contemporary women activist-poets offer the most promising visions of decolonial futures. For Darlene Rodrigues, Malia Derden and Reyna Ramolete Hayashi, death becomes a catalyst for the deep political commitment necessary for new futures to be enacted. Their poems honor, respectively, the death of a loved one fighting in Iraq (Myla Maravillosa), a transwoman murdered by a U.S. marine (Jennifer Laude), and a *kasama* (comrade) (Dionel Campos) tortured and massacred by U.S. -trained paramilitary troops in the Philippines. While the poems critique respectively: war, militarized transmisogyny, and militarized mining, they also speak to a host creative possibility: peace, food sovereignty, transnational transliberation, Indigenous education, land-based spirituality and more. These poems offer visions of new political possibility for Filipin@s in Hawai‘i, how we’re perceived, and how our energies might best be spent. In the clarity that follows mourning, these elegists are re-visioning genuine security and genuine sovereignty for the Philippines, Hawai‘i, and beyond.

In the conclusion, I offer some reflections on contemporary movements for demilitarization and decolonization in Hawai‘i and the role of fear in stifling political dissent. I point to the vital importance of the artists, writers and community leaders in my archive who commemorate our victories and give us the tools to chart postimperial futures. Decolonial courage, I argue, is necessary for all us to take responsibility to enact genuine sovereignty and genuine security.

I wrote this dissertation with primary attention to artists, scholars and activists in the Hawai‘i context, however, I hope that these observations will be useful to those outside Hawai‘i

as well. The conversations around productive tensions and decolonial collaborations are increasingly relevant in other settler colonies. I am particularly interested in methodologies that point to mutual recognition in ways that are pono (just, balanced, harmonious). There is increasing need for comparative analysis of Hawai‘i with places like Guåhan, Canada, and Israel/Palestine that all have significant settlements of Filipin@s alongside rising movement for Indigenous recognition and nationhood.

Colonization, Occupation, Colonial occupation

The goal is to prevent words from becoming the source of contention and adversarial engagement, but instead to choose them well enough that what they offer is clarity with accuracy and of course, basic respect. — Kanalu Young

“Emergent Allies: Decolonizing and Narrating Hawai‘i from a Filipin@ perspective,” is a title in progress, particularly because the term de/colonization has become so contested in Hawai‘i. It’s important I clarify my own use of the term. I use the word “colonized” throughout the dissertation to describe Hawai‘i’s relationship with the United States. However, I acknowledge that a growing number of respected scholars including Kanalu Young, Keanu Sai and Kūhiō Vogeler assert that the most appropriate term to describe Hawai‘i’s relationship with the U.S. is *occupation*, and an illegal one at that. In this view, colonization exclusively applies to peoples who lacked an internationally recognized nation-state. In my usage here, I use the term colonized in a broad sense to refer to both the occupation of land and resources and the range of concomitant social and cultural controls required to naturalize that occupation. My use of colonization also allows me to talk in a comparative framework with the Philippines more easily. I often use “(neo)colonized” to refer to the Philippines and “colonized” or “colonial occupation”

to refer to Hawai‘i. I refer to Filipin@s in Hawai‘i as racialized or oppressed people who have a “(neo)colonial” relationship with the United States.

There is a second way that the word “decolonization” might give some readers pause with regard to a literary and cultural studies. In “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang have rightly argued that decolonization is not the same as justice or equality within the settler state; decolonization is about repatriating Indigenous land. To be clear, I am using the term to include both the literal meaning of land repatriation *and* the culture and justice-based activism that engages lāhui (the nation) in a myriad of efforts that to prepare for the day of land transfer. In conceptualizing a decolonial literary criticism relevant to Hawai‘i, I have tried to emphasize the way land / struggle has been represented and imagined. Decolonization in my usage can still keep land at the center, even in literary analysis.

I want to clarify my phrase “decolonizing Hawai‘i from a Filipin@ perspective.” Decolonization is something Indigenous people must set the terms for. Settlers cannot decolonize lands not their own on their own; to take over the sovereignty movement would be another form of theft. They can, however, bring their own stories of resistance to these movements, as well as tell new stories that bring Indigenous land struggle to light. Diasporic Filipin@s can also take leadership within our own communities to help articulate Kanaka Maoli demands in culturally competent ways. As Harsha Walia put it, “Respecting Indigenous leadership is not the same as waiting around to be told what to do while you do nothing.” To do so in my view is to practice a form of spectator solidarity from the sidelines. Kānaka Maoli are fighting on multiple fronts and anti-imperialist Filipin@s have a role to play. Determining our kuleana is not always easy, but knowing more of our own literary and activist heritage can only strengthen our confidence that we have decolonial gifts to share.

Filipin@s, like many from “postcolonial” nations, know first hand that decolonization is an ongoing process that isn’t complete with the declaration of independence from the colonizer(s) or a seat at the United Nations. The independent Philippine nation state facilitates foreign military occupation and corporate mining that forces so many millions into poverty and diaspora. In the case of Hawai‘i, where formal decolonization has not begun, ‘Ōiwi and their allies employ a variety of strategies both to resist the settler state and to build post-imperial futures outside the settler state. When the day comes when the Hawai‘i is returned to Indigenous hands (for example, with the withdrawal of military bases) lāhui will know what to build in its place because they will have grounded themselves in ways of living that center ‘Ōiwi values.

I also acknowledge that some scholars prefer the exclusive use of the word “deoccupation” to refer to land, relegating “decolonization” to refer to realm of culture and society, as in “Decolonizing the mind,” to use Ngugi wa Thiongo’s framework. In *Octavia’s Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements*, Walidah Imarisha writes, “We believe this space [of literature] is vital for any process of decolonization, because the decolonization of the imagination is the most dangerous and subversive form there is: for it is where all other forms of decolonization are born. Once the imagination is unshackled, liberation is limitless” (4). I hope my intervention will feed the decolonial imagination to motivate Filipin@s in Hawai‘i to agitate for genuine deoccupation, demilitarization, and bold, imaginative futures worth fighting for. If I were to choose a second title, it might have been “Libornio’s Brood,” as he represents the creative liberation and commitment needed to sing a “dangerous and subversive” song of sovereignty wherever our circumstances may take us.

Notes

¹ In this dissertation, I use the terms Hawaiian, Kanaka Maoli, Kanaka 'Ōiwi and 'Ōiwi interchangeably to refer to "Native Hawaiian" or "Indigenous Hawaiian."

² The original name of the band was the Royal Hawaiian Military Band because the bandmembers were technically members of the military. After the overthrow and the defection by the royalist members, two bands were formed: the Hawaiian band, led by Henry Berger, and the Hawaiian National Band, led by Libornio. Today the band is called the Royal Hawaiian Band.

³ In her 1999 essay "Aloha 'Āina: New Perspectives on Kaulana Nā Pua," Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman argues there is strong evidence that Wright was the lyricist, and Libornio was the composer: "The group approached Ellen Wright Prendergast to set their sentiments of loyalty and allegiance to Queen Lili'uokalani into poetic expression, because Prendergast was known as a poet. If Prendergast was primarily a poet, it is entirely possible that she gave out the poetry to be set to a melody by someone else—in this case, J. S. Libornio" (93). However, Stillman stops short of saying Libornio was definitively the composer, arguing that it is "equally possible" that Prendergast was the lyricist / composer and Libornio was the arranger (94). In contrast, a 2015 newsletter from the Friends of the Royal Hawaiian Band unequivocally credits Libornio as the composer [Schweizer 2]).

⁴ "Settler of color" is a term that Haunani-Kay Trask coined in her groundbreaking essay, "Settlers of Color and "Immigrant" Hegemony: 'Locals' in Hawai'i." In this essay, Trask begins with a quote by Fanon. Coming from Martinique, Fanon shared the same colonizer as the Algerians, just as Filipin@s share the colonizer as the Hawaiians. He is a "native" from another land, and in that regard, a settler in Algeria. Fanon was also a revolutionary, and an organic intellectual whose contributions are inestimable for those in the settler colonies and postcolonies alike. The centrality of Fanon to Indigenous studies, particularly in Hawai'i, is a useful reminder that Filipin@s and other settlers of color have tremendous decolonial potential as well.

⁵ See Kanalu Young, "An Interdisciplinary Study Of The Term 'Hawaiian.'"

⁶ Ota Camp Makibaka (Tagalog for "struggle") Association fought a 30-year housing struggle for Filipin@ families in Waipahu who had been targeted for mass eviction. In 2001, the 31 families settled with the city to purchase 5.7 acres and keep the community together, a major victory for former plantation workers with little access to buying land in Hawai'i's speculative market (Pang). Operation Manong was the project at University of Hawai'i Mānoa to increase student outreach and access for Filipin@s, Hawaiians, and other underrepresented ethnic groups on campus. The project was closely tied to efforts to start Ethnic Studies, which was also a major victory representing student/community collaboration. Started in 1971, OM is now called the Office of Multicultural Services (Bautista).

⁷ Peggy Ha'o Ross' daughter May Lili'uokalani Ross and Verzon married on Kaho'olawe island and raised a family together. The role of Filipino-Hawaiian family and kinship networks is an important site of allyship that I explore in Chapter Two.

⁸ According to the 2010 U.S. census figures "race alone" category on Hawai'i, 197,497 identify as only Filipin@, or 15% of the total population, and in the "race alone or in combination" category 342,095 identify as part-Filipin@, or 25% of the total population. In the "race alone" category 47,951 identify as only Hawaiian, or 6% of the total population and in the

“race alone or in combination” category, 182,120 as part-Hawaiian or 21% of the total population (“Table 6”).

⁹ See Alan Punzalan Issac’s *American Tropics: Articulating Filipino America*, Lanny Thompson’s *Imperial Archipelagoes: Representation and Rule in the Insular Territories under U.S. Dominion after 1898*; and Faye Caronan’s *Legitimizing Empire: Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican Cultural Critique*.

¹⁰ For analysis of anti-Filipin@ barriers in the education system, see Amefil Agbayani’s “The Education of Filipinos in Hawai‘i”; for personal reflections from an immigrant student point of view, see Nadine Ortega’s “Matris ti Kinaasinno/Womb of Being”; for historical analysis of the origins of anti-Filipin@ stereotyping in Hawai‘i, see Jonathan Okamura’s “From Running Amok to Eating Dogs: A Century of Misrepresenting Filipino Americans in Hawai‘i”; for analysis of accent discrimination against Filipin@s in Hawai‘i, see Mari Matsuda’s “Voices of America: Accent, Antidiscrimination Law, and a Jurisprudence for the Last Reconstruction.”

¹¹ See J. Neil C. Garcia’s *Philippine Gay Culture* University of the Philippines P, 1996 and Grace Nono Song of the *Babaylan: Living Voices, Medicines, Spiritualities of Philippine Ritualist-Oralist-Healers*, Institute of Spirituality in Asia, 2013.

¹² For analysis of the gendered impacts of militarization, see Cynthia Enloe’s *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives*; and *Gender and Globalization in Asia and the Pacific: Method, Practice, Theory*, edited by Kathy Ferguson, Gwyn Kirk and Monique Mironesco.

¹³ See David Stannard’s *Honor Killing: Race, Rape, and Clarence Darrow’s Spectacular Last Case* and John Rosa’s *Local Story: the Massie-Kahahawai Case and the Culture of History*.

¹⁴ ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui prefers the term “mana wahine,” arguing it is a more culturally relevant framework for the liberation of Kanaka Maoli women: “Mana wahine is a female-based power, strength, and resilience, the essence of womanhood. It embodies feminist ideas, although ‘feminism’ is a problematic term because mana wahine predates the Western concept” (132).

¹⁵ One important example is the Gunglo Dagiti Mannurat Nga Ilokano Iti Hawai‘i (GUMIL), the Association Of Ilokano Writers that has been active since the 1970s. To his credit, NVM Gonzalez and Oscar Campomanes included analysis of their important contributions in their 1997 essay, “Filipino American Literature.”

¹⁶ In commemorative histories of Filipin@s in Hawai‘i, the overthrow is seldom mentioned. For example, the journal *Pagdiriwang 1996: Legacy and Vision of Hawaii’s Filipino Americans*, the 1998 “Filipino Americans of Hawai‘i: A Celebration of Courage, Service and Achievement,” exhibit program at the Bishop Museum exhibit, and the 2006 Philippine Centennial Celebration program.

¹⁷ As of 2005, the Hawai‘i Legislature had 34 members of Filipin@ heritage, and 18 of Hawaiian heritage; 51 members were White, 80 were Japanese. (Fujikane, “Introduction,” *Asian Settler Colonialism*, 22).

¹⁸ According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2015 American Community Survey, of those Filipin@s (one race) over the 16 years or older, 8.1% were “Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services”; 15.6% have a Bachelor’s degree; 3.3% have a graduate or professional degree.

¹⁹ I would include Candace Fujikane and Dean Saranillio's most recent work in this category as well. See Fujikane, "Asian American Critique And Moana Nui 2011: Securing A Future Beyond Empires, Militarized Capitalism And APEC"; Saranillio, "Why Asian Settler Colonialism Matters: A Thought Piece On Critiques, Debates, And Indigenous Difference," *Settler Colonial Studies*. Also useful is Jodi Byrd's book *Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*, and Lisa King's, "Competition, Complicity, and (Potential) Alliance: Native Hawaiian and Asian Immigrant Narratives at the Bishop Museum."

²⁰ For an important example of settler aloha 'āina perspective, see Candace Fujikane, "Mapping Wonder in the Māui Mo'olelo on the Mo'o'āina . Growing Aloha 'Āina Through Indigenous and Settler Affinity Activism."

²¹ See Saranillio's "Why Asian Settler Colonialism Matters: A Thought Piece On Critiques, Debates, And Indigenous Difference."

²² See "C&H Sugar Commercial "Island" 1974," uploaded by DJBell1986, 18 Nov. 2009.

²³ Note that while chapter one is about texts written by Filipin@ settlers in Hawai'i, chapter two is about the perspectives of Hawaiian visitors to the Philippines, and one additional interviewee who has settled there.

PART I:
DECOLONIAL ALLIANCES

CHAPTER 1

FILIPIN@ SETTLER KULEANA:

ON THE PAGE, ON THE STAGE, AND IN THE WORLD

Performing a play or choreographing dances offers not only the possibility of entertainment, but also the chance to encounter the past in a corporeal fashion, to sustain an oblique critique of American assimilation, or to call a community into being.

— Theo Gonzalves, *The Day the Dancers Stayed: Performing in the Filipino/American Diaspora*

In the 1990s, I wrote and performed with several Filipin@ American theater groups in the San Francisco performing arts scene at a dynamic time that Sarita See refers to as “the Filipino American cultural moment” (xvii). In *The Decolonized Eye: Filipino American Art and Performance*, See argues the 90s was a period when Filipin@ American artists and performers reached an unprecedented level of decolonial sophistication, expanding the transgressive potential of the Filipino body to “disarticulate” empire (xviii). Having arrived in San Francisco from Atlanta in 1992, I was thrilled to finally have access to other Filipin@ American writers, directors, performers and audiences who were as engaged as I was in questions of identity, history, and justice. Through Teatro ng Tanan (“Theater for the People”) and the more irreverent sketch comedy group Tongue in a Mood (an anglicized pun of the Tagalog curse “*Putang Ina Mo*” or “Your Mother is a Whore”) I played a range of characters that aimed to challenge racist stereotypes and build meaningful alternatives. In Gary San Angel’s *Knight of the Broken*, I played a loving grandmother haunting a young boy’s dreams; in “PCN (Pilipino Cultural Night)

Salute,” I played an apolitical teenager facing the ghost of Jose Rizal, and in “The Real Professor,” I spoofed anti-imperialist zealotry in the Ethnic Studies classroom.¹ Just as See argues “identity is a decolonizing practice, one that ironically comes most alive when identity is under erasure,” for me theater work was absolutely a decolonizing practice that was embodied, experiential and deeply meaningful (129).

The San Francisco / Bay Area credits itself with being a leader of progressive politics so in addition to Filipin@ American issues, I performed in plays exploring themes of LGBT visibility, disability rights, Asian American identities, and cross-cultural alliances.² These activist-theater spaces afforded me similar opportunities to engage with performance as a tool of liberation. As writers and actors, we claimed the power of the stage with our stories, contradicting the multiple forms of oppression that dictate which bodies are worthy of being seen and heard.

It is perhaps unsurprising that within these “people of color” and “progressive” circles there was no critique – that I can remember – of the ongoing U.S. occupation of Indigenous land, and the Ohlone Indigenous people who had called the Bay Area home for thousands of years. Even the 500-year anniversary of Columbus’ landing in 1992 did not open up a sustained discussion on settler colonialism, our role as artists and settlers on land under U.S. occupation, or the ongoing struggles of Indigenous/tribal Filipin@s to protect their land and water. Even in “Dragon Lady v. Pocahontas,” an all-women’s sketch comedy collaboration between Asian American Theater Company and Latina Theater Lab that I performed with in 1999, we did not engage the real-life story of Pocahontas, despite the provocative title.

My attention to Indigenous people’s issues sharpened in 2002 when I moved to Maui. I began working in the theater scene there as well, and co-founded with Kanaka Maoli playwright

Keali‘iwahine Hokoana-Gormley a theater company called Talking Stories. Our first production was Alani Apio’s *Kāmau*, a play about a working-class Hawaiian family threatened with eviction from their ancestral land. The main character Alika defends his choice to work for a tourism company to support his family, but he must confront his cousin Michael who will do anything to destroy the planned hotel that threatens their way of life. In the dramatic ending, they part as enemies and Michael goes to jail for injuring the hotel security guard. My time in the Bay Area gave me ample opportunities to interrogate white supremacy – also a problem in Hawai‘i’s theater world – but I did not have the language for land and water struggle, and even less about what might be Filipin@s’ positionalities with regard to the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. Although my father was born in Hawai‘i and I had read Haunani Kay Trask’s 1993 *Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai‘i*, my learning curve was steep. The once empowering term “Filipina American” now sounded like a term of complicity, an affirmation of America’s claim to Hawai‘i, and an assertion of my rights within the settler state. As Dean Saranillio puts it, “terms that at one time seemed commonsensical now ring hollow and look perversely constructed as rhetoric that functions to obscure the colonial domination of Native Hawaiians” (“Colonial Amnesia” 257). Although primarily an actor and writer, I focused on directing and producing in order that Kanaka Maoli stories could take center stage. Not all of the work we did had politics as explicit as Apio’s, but almost all had “local” characters who spoke Hawai‘i Creole English (pidgin). Although our plays had some Filipin@ characters, Filipin@ history and politics was never a central theme, nor was it a priority to put Filipin@ and Hawaiian colonizations in conversation with each other. As a scholar and performing artist, I was eager to explore how this might be done.

Questions arose from my theater work then that I now pursue in this chapter: what is the kuleana (responsibility, rights, and authority) of decolonial Filipin@ performing artists in Hawai‘i today? How do we bring themes specific to Filipin@ colonization to Hawai‘i’s stages in a way that is pono (correct, proper, just) given the fact that Hawai‘i itself is still occupied and colonized? Further, when we take to the stage for our own empowerment, how can we make that translate into new roles for ourselves offstage as well? As Gonzalves’ epigraph reminds us, theatre is an extension of the political priorities of the people who produce it; if that is true, what kind of politics do we envision in a decolonized Hawai‘i?

Utang na loób and Filipin@ settler kuleana

In “Colonial Amnesia: Rethinking Filipino ‘American’ Settler Empowerment in the U.S. Colony of Hawai‘i,” Saranillio puts needed pressure on Filipin@s in Hawai‘i to make our solidarity explicit – on the page and in the world – to support ‘Ōiwi in their fight for sovereignty and justice. He examines a wide archive that includes memoir, newspapers, and visual art to track how Filipin@ settlers in Hawai‘i have employed discourses of civil rights to gain respect and assimilate within an American-occupied Hawai‘i. In doing so, Filipin@s have unknowingly assisted the settler state in its efforts to render itself innocent, the impartial purveyor of civil rights for all. Saranillio argues that rather than behaving like loyal Americans indebted to our colonizer, we should direct our *utang na loób* (Tagalog for “debt of gratitude”) to Native Hawaiians, the original inhabitants of the islands we call home. He ends the essay with analysis of a solidarity action done by Filipina demilitarization activists in Hawai‘i demanding an end to the U.S. military training on O‘ahu that prepares troops for “anti-terrorist” missions on Mindanao, Southern Philippines. Saranillio explains why their public statement is so exemplary:

[T]he statement of these activists helps us to realize that U.S. imperialism in the form of U.S. militarism in the Philippines is part of imperialist global forces colonizing Native Hawaiians. The activism of these ten Filipina settler activists illustrates the positive role Filipinos in Hawai‘i can play in supporting the anti-imperialist struggles of Native Hawaiians and Filipinos in the Philippines— as Filipino settlers in Hawai‘i, we are historically bound by both struggles against U.S. imperialism. (274)

Many of these same women are now part of Decolonial Pin@ys, a Honolulu-based group that grounds most of my academic and activist work. A big part of our task in Decolonial Pin@ys is to define that “positive role” for ourselves, to make visible and accessible how the still pervasive U.S. empire links the Philippines and Hawai‘i. Further, it is important to bring the lessons of Filipin@ anti-colonial movements to strengthen and nourish the independence movement in Hawai‘i. In this way, we are able to make connections between the two sites with regard to both the trauma of our colonizations and the triumphs of our sovereignties. Part of this work happens through the way we represent Hawai‘i and ourselves as Filipin@s as artists, writers, and performers.³

Saranillio’s exploration of *utang na loób* is closely linked to the concept of “settler kuleana,” and in this chapter I use them interchangeably. Kuleana is translated as “rights, responsibilities, and authority” but in Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua’s 2013 book *The Seeds We Planted: Portraits of a Native Hawaiian Charter School*, she theorizes the term as it is used at Hālau Kū Māna on O‘ahu, an Indigenous Hawaiian culture-based charter school with a mixture of Kanaka Maoli and settlers on staff. According to Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, the staff stays in regular

dialogue about each person's kuleana, which is not always easy to determine. Key to their process is asking questions. She writes:

The notion of kuleana has been an important one within HKM's school culture because it shifts people's thinking away from static identity categories (who is or isn't Hawaiian) and toward more subtle, context-based responsibilities and positionalities...One finds and fulfills his or her own kuleana by considering his or her relation to history/genealogy, to place, and to the other people with attachments to that place. (150)

Where Saranillio's essay aims to mark the distinction between settler and Indigenous (admittedly an important intervention to centralize Indigenous land claims), Goodyear-Ka'ōpua theorizes ways settlers must sharpen their attention even further to understand their relationship to particular 'āina and each other. At the root of *utang na loób* and settler kuleana is an ethical commitment to "knowing our place" in the place where we're at. But for settlers of color like Filipin@s in Hawai'i who might misread settler colonial analytics as attempting to *sever* our relationship with Hawai'i, Goodyear-Ka'ōpua makes clear she wants settlers to *deepen* our connection to Hawai'i, or more specifically, to deepen our connection to particular 'āina. While it's important not to lose sight of settler positionality, she argues that when we "fall in love with 'āina" we build more lasting commitment to its care (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, "The Enduring Power").

In this chapter, I follow Saranillio and Goodyear-Ka'ōpua's lead with the optimism that through textual analysis we can chart a tentative politics of solidarity in Jovita Rodas Zimmerman's 1997 *Carmela* and Troy Apostol's 2006 *Who the Fil-Am I?* I consider here how these playwrights are also theorizing questions of *utang na lob* to Kānaka Maoli and kuleana to

Hawai‘i, and in doing so spark the decolonial imagination for new futures to incubate. I begin by contextualizing each play within overlapping histories: the rising political power of movements for Hawaiian sovereignty alongside the issues facing the Filipin@ community in Hawai‘i. In other words, my task is twofold: to situate where those settlers are coming from and to situate their stories on the land they call home. By providing the historical context of these plays’ development, we can better understand what the conditions of possibility are at particular moments for settler solidarity with Indigenous people to emerge, particularly in the complex milieu of contemporary Hawai‘i where Filipin@s comprise close to 25% of the population. Theo Gonzalves has argued, “Art and culture should, in their broadest and noblest senses, serve the political sensibility and spirit of the day” (77). I examine what those political sensibilities were in these two important decades (the 1990s and the 2000s) from a Filipin@s-in-Hawai‘i point of view.

1990s – Decade of Decolonial Centennial Commemorations

The 1990s might be remembered as a time in Hawai‘i’s history when, to use Candace Fujikane’s language, the “fragile fictions of empire” came into sharp relief (“Asian American Critique” 191). For Hawaiian nationalists and their supporters, 1993 was particularly significant. The centennial commemoration of the 1893 overthrow of the monarchy brought the opportunity to lay bare the violence that accompanies (white) American “democracy.” Kānaka Maoli and their allies used several methods to protest these crimes. These included the 1993 march to ‘Iolani Palace, (the same place from where Queen Lili‘uokalani reigned and was kept under house arrest for nine months following her trial in 1895). It is also where Haunani-Kay Trask delivered her most famous speech, “We are not Americans” to a crowd of 20,000 (Goodyear-

Ka‘ōpua, “Introduction,” *Nation Rising* 16-17). In this same year, Trask’s acclaimed book *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai‘i* was released to international acclaim. Joan Lander and Puhipau Ahmad’s released their breakthrough documentary *Act of War*, featuring several prominent Hawaiian studies scholars including Jon Kamakawiwo‘ole Osorio and Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa explaining Hawai‘i’s history from a Hawaiian point of view. Clinton signed the Apology Bill this same year, which included no promises of U.S. land transfer, but was a significant victory nonetheless.

Performance was also an important tool of Hawaiian political protest. The renowned Kanaka Maoli playwright Victoria Nālani Kneubuhl presented three theatrical productions commemorating specific centennial anniversaries of 1890s Hawaiian historical events. Diane Looser writes of Kneubuhl’s contribution: “Throughout her career, Kneubuhl has been committed to using theatrical performance in its various forms to interrogate historical injustices, hegemonic versions of historical ‘truth,’ and characterizations of Hawaiian culture that erase or overwrite Indigenous experience and epistemologies, while offering restorative messages and, in some instances, stimulating efforts that bring about material social change” (99). Kneubuhl’s most ambitious of the three productions was her 15-hour living history pageant *January, 1893*. The production was staged over three days as part of the January 1993 commemorations at ‘Iolani Palace (Looser 93). The play ends with Lili‘uokalani exhorting the crowds to: “Hold fast to that pride and love you have for your heritage and your country. Yes, *your* country! . . . never give up—to seek through peaceful, political means to unite as one people” and to “regain our rightful heritage and rightful government” (Looser 95). Since 1993, this first play has been viewed by close to 20,000 people through the annual Mai Poina (“Never Forget”) historical

walking tour at ‘Iolani Palace (Looser 93). Two of my interviewees in the next chapter discuss the events of 1993 as critical to their political awakening as Hawaiian nationalists.

The 1990s marked two more important centennial celebrations for Hawaiian history, the trial of Lili‘uokalani in 1895, and U.S. annexation in 1898.⁴ Kneubuhl’s *Trial of a Queen: 1895 Military Tribunal* was produced as part of a museum program to educate the public about this lesser known chapter of the aftermath of the overthrow. In 1895 Lili‘uokalani had to endure charges of misprision of treason at the hands of the same oligarchy that ended her reign. They arrested her and convicted her for allegedly knowing of the coup to restore the monarchy led by Hawaiian nationalist Robert Wilcox. The Queen was convicted and sentenced to five years hard labor; instead she was held under house arrest in ‘Iolani Palace for eight months. These details about the queen’s trial and Kneubuhl’s examination through educational theater are particularly relevant with regard to *Carmela*, which is about another Indigenous woman who loses her fight with the colonial U.S. court system in Hawai‘i. The play was published only two years after Kneubuhl debuted *Trial of a Queen*.

The 1990s was significant from a Filipin@ historical perspective as well, particularly 1996. This year marked several important anniversaries: the centenary of the start of Philippine Revolution (the first democratic national revolution in Asia)⁵, the 50th anniversary of Philippine Independence from the United States, the 90th anniversary of the first *sakada* (Visayan for “plantation worker”) immigration to Hawai‘i, and the 50th anniversary of the last recruitment of *sakadas* to Hawai‘i. The *Pagdiriwang* (Tagalog for “celebrations”) included a traveling photo exhibit by the Filipino American Historical Society of Hawai‘i entitled “The Filipinos’ Continuing Quest for Freedom and Dignity: Pagdiriwang ‘96.” The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa organized a year-long series of twelve community forums, culminating in a special issue

of the journal *Social Process* entitled “Pagdiriwang 1996: Legacy and Vision of Hawai‘i’s Filipino Americans.” According to Rod Labrador, who co-organized the series with Jonathan Okamura, “Pagdiriwang ’96 allowed participants to take stock of the past, examine the present, and create a vision for their collective future” (7). Part of this included a vision of trying to recuperate Filipin@ identity and pride, both from the standpoint of internal divisions and demeaning stereotypes from society as a whole.

Just as with Kānaka Maoli, theater had an important role in bringing Filipin@ history to life in the 1990s Hawai‘i. There was one production in particular that aimed to tell a deliberately decolonial history, writer/director Chris Millado’s *Peregrinasyon* (Tagalog for “Wandering Nation”). In 1994, the play debuted in San Francisco at Teatro ng Tanan. Then in 1996, Millado brought the play to Honolulu’s Kumu Kahua (Hawaiian for “original stage”) Theater before bringing it to New York’s Ma-Yi Theater in 1998. Taking place between 1898-1935, the play tells the story of two brothers who are separated during the Philippine-American War: one stays at home and struggles to survive the colonial occupation, the other goes abroad and faces racism in Hawai‘i, Alaska and California. Millado challenges the notion of American benevolence through his exploration of the war America would rather forget,⁶ land reform, labor exploitation, and (illegal) interracial relationships, all while experimenting with surrealist techniques and Filipin@ martial arts. The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* referred to it as “an artistic triumph” (Berger). Two years later, Millado would bring this same play to the Cultural Center of the Philippines, a trip that would inspire Troy Apostol to write *Who the Fil-Am I?* in 2006. *Peregrinasyon* was a milestone for decolonial Filipin@ American theater in that Millado makes the connection between the violence of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines and the violent racism facing Filipin@s immigrants in the United States. In other words, the structuring logic of white

supremacy that drove the conquest of the Philippines (White man's burden, Manifest destiny) also provided the rationale for the anti-Filipin@ racism that resulted in suppressed wages, miscegenation laws, and the racialized violence that culminated in the 1930s Watsonville Riots. Millado's willingness to paint an unflattering picture of Filipin@'s relationship with the United States recalls See's attention to the emerging decolonial politics among Filipin@ American artists and performers of the groundbreaking 1990s.

While there is definitely a recognizable decolonial politics at work in these Filipin@ commemorative works from 1996, none of them can be described as putting the two colonizations – or the two sovereignties – into conversation with each other. While See was correct in naming the 1990s as a breakthrough decade in which Filipin@ American performers had a “decolonized eye,” their gaze was still averted from the Indigenous land struggles of the North American continent where these performances were taking place. Filipin@s in Hawai'i made strides in talking about the “c” word – colonialism – but only as it affected Filipin@s. Even Millado's *Peregrinasyon* makes no mention of Hawai'i, Alaska or the continent as colonized land. Although the play does excellent work in encouraging Filipin@s to “look back” to their proud history of resistance against U.S. and Spanish colonialisms, it does not go the next step of recognizing the Kanaka Maoli struggle as connected with their own. Given the success and visibility of Hawaiian sovereignty movement at the time, it's likely that audiences made those connections privately, but in terms of the decolonial message Filipin@ performers were making on Hawai'i's stages, settler kuleana / *utang na loób* to Hawaiians was not yet evident.

It is this context of Filipin@ non-recognition of Hawaiian struggle that makes Jovita Rodas Zimmerman's *Carmela* so extraordinary.⁷ The play was printed in Zimmerman's 1997 collection *Hawaii's Filipino Americans: A Collection of Plays, Essays and Short Stories*, which

deserves special attention for a number of reasons. Zimmerman was well-known as a journalist, essayist and community leader, having been active with Filipino Association of University Women and anti-Marcos activism. Given the title of the book, and the dearth of materials on Filipin@s in Hawai‘i available at the time, one might have expected Zimmerman to write an introduction in keeping with the diasporic nationalist tendencies discussed earlier. It was not uncommon then for settler historiography to begin with the settlers’ arrival. This is a well-documented problem that Haunani-Kay Trask, Candace Fujikane, Dean Saranillio and other critics of settler colonialism have written on extensively.⁸ Instead Zimmerman opens her essay with a discussion of the strength and vibrancy of Hawaiian culture and history for several pages *before* addressing the issues of the community she has set out to represent. Also noteworthy is her plainspoken criticism of then-Governor Ben Cayetano who explicitly dismissed sovereignty claims of Native Hawaiians and oversaw the dismantling of Hawaiian-only elections for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.⁹ Zimmerman writes:

The Hawaiians have become more vocal with their valid grievances and Cayetano’s response, so far, fails to allay fears that the injustices done in the past will be corrected. In 1993, a hundred years after the colonizers deposed the Hawaiian monarchy, I felt compelled to write for a Honolulu paper the following: “One can live in another country not one’s own with eyes and mind closed, insensitive to the local population and without a desire to participate other than protecting one’s private world. But the realization may occur that a community from which we extract benefits – a job, an education, the organizations that enhance our lives – deserves to be paid back. Sometimes events may tear down

the walls of our indifference and we realize we cannot stay untouched, or unmoved.” (7)

Here Zimmerman is giving a glimpse into what might be called her definition of Filipin@kuleana. Given that Cayetano was the first Filipin@ American governor in the United States, Zimmerman may have felt some pressure to celebrate his election to the governor’s office in 1994 as evidence of a political “coming of age” for Filipin@s in Hawai‘i as was typical at the time. (He would be re-elected to a second term in 1998). Instead, she wrote this biting critique to reiterate her strong opposition to Cayetano’s policies. Also noteworthy is her insistence that Filipin@s in Hawai‘i show respect to Hawaiians and their “country,” those from whom “we extract benefits” and who “deserve to be paid back.” Zimmerman celebrates the many victories of Hawaiian activists to perpetuate their national identity and culture in the face of rapid colonization and urbanization. Zimmerman’s support for Hawaiian sovereignty is not the same as Saranillio’s, but I argue her introduction points to an emergent solidarity that was truly ahead of its time. In this passage, she describes a kind of recognition, or debt of gratitude (“*utang na loób*”) to Native Hawaiians that Saranillio would write in his “Colonial Amnesia” essay thirteen years later.

Carmela was written in this context of a growing awareness of Hawaiian sovereignty issues and the need to take a public stand as Filipin@s in Hawai‘i. Zimmerman would surely have known two other prominent Filipino activist-journalists who wrote about their own support for this growing movement. Johnny Verzon is a community organizer originally from Pangasinan who is best known for his contributions to the struggles at Ota Camp, Operation Manong and Filipinos Against Discrimination in Employment. In 1996, the mainstream community newspaper *The Hawai‘i Filipino Chronicle*, then only three years old, published

Johnny Verzon's cover story "One Filipino's Case for Hawaiian Sovereignty" in which he argues for a "Filipino Hawaiian Alliance" to cement sovereignty in the islands. Verzon writes:

As a member of the International Council of the Sovereign Kingdom of the Ohana O Hawaii, a group of non-Hawaiians who support the group's quest for an independent Hawaii, I favor a secessionist model for several reasons. I firmly believe that Hawaiian sovereignty holds the best promise for uplifting the conditions of the Hawaiian people in particular and for managing the islands resources as a whole. (4)

The *Hawai'i Filipino Chronicle* calls itself "The Voice of the Filipino Community," so the fact that they ran a cover story about "uplifting the conditions of the *Hawaiian* people" marks an important act of solidarity. In that same issue, Zachery Labez interviews Kanaka Maoli attorney – activist Poka Laenui, also known as Hayden F. Burgess, who addresses questions of Hawaiian sovereignty for non-Hawaiians. Labez was also a well-respected community activist and editor affiliated with the United Filipino Council of Hawai'i, the Filipino Coalition for Solidarity, *Hawai'i Filipino Chronicle* and *The Fil-Am Courier*. Saranillio credits Labez with being a "key voice" guiding his early thinking about Hawaiian sovereignty (265). These individuals deserve mention alongside Zimmerman as evidence of the key role of progressive journalists who were pushing the conversation on Hawaiian sovereignty in the Filipin@ community in ways much more obvious and accessible than academics, artists and playwrights.

In terms of the play itself, there are several scenes in *Carmela* that I argue provide further evidence of an emergent Filipin@ solidarity with Native Hawaiians. While there are no characters that take up the cause of Hawaiian Sovereignty in the same way as the journalists above, I have chosen her play as well as the Troy Apostol's *Who the Fil-Am I?* (which I discuss later) based on two criteria: one, both plays recognize Hawai'i as a country under occupation by

the United States, which is not true in many creative and cultural works from “Filipin@ America”; and two, both Zimmerman and Apostol put the colonizations of both nations in conversation with each other. These three criteria put these two plays in an unique category within Filipin@ literatures of Hawai‘i. Zimmerman and Apostol have attempted what few others have tried, and in those attempts, help us to unpack the complex positionality of Filipin@s in Hawai‘i, who wrestle with the racism of Americanized Hawai‘i, and their *utang na loób* to Hawaiians still under U.S. occupation.

Carmela and the Intimate Side of Imperial Violence

Jovita Zimmerman’s 1997 *Carmela* tells the powerful story of an Ifugao woman trying her best to regain custody of her son whose American father put him in foster care in Hawai‘i. The play takes on multiple issues including false accusations of child sexual abuse, border imperialism, Filipin@ infighting, misogyny, interracial marriage, and bourgeois assimilation. Alongside this substantive list Zimmerman also includes some exploration of the shared colonization of Hawaiians and Filipin@s – particularly tribal Filipin@s¹⁰ – through a focus on the intimate side of imperial violence: the policing of gender, sexuality, and parenting. In this way, Zimmerman’s play can be read as offering of a nascent *utang na loób* in the way the decolonial characters interrupt anti-tribal and anti-Indigenous racisms.

It is important to note that I am discussing the play as text and not performance because *Carmela* was never produced or reviewed. In that respect, the play serves as a reminder of the unrealized potential of diasporic Filipina playwrights who are severely underrepresented on Hawai‘i’s stages. If the uniqueness of the play genre is defined by an embodied performance interacting with a live audience, that is, of seeing and hearing bodies in motion performing a

story of a particular location at a particular moment, in the case of this text, none of that has occurred. I can make no references to directors, actors, audiences or critics. But through this text, Zimmerman offers an opportunity to engage with her *imagined* embodiment of this story. Importantly, she imagined a performance in which sixteen of the twenty-two bodies are Filipina ones, who in their own small ways acknowledge they are on Hawaiian land.

The play is set in the mid-1990s and concerns an unnamed Filipina organization on O'ahu facing conflict over whether to support a Philippines-based Ifugao woman (Carmela Packard) in her battle to reunite with her son Ted who is in foster care in Hawai'i. Some of the organization's members refuse to help Carmela based on anti-Igorot prejudice but also because Carmela's husband Lester Packard faces charges of sexual molestation. While of course the courts in any country must take all threats to child safety seriously, the only thing worse than sexual abuse is being falsely accused of it, and Carmela insists the charges are false. In short, both Packard and his ex-wife were having affairs; his ex-wife falsely accused him of sexually abusing their children when she learns of his affair, then leaves those same children for him and Carmela to care for. Although a Manila court convicts him, they do not jail him based on the dubious behavior of the accuser. Packard comes to Honolulu to get his pension in order, which the courts suspended during the trial, thus hampering the couple's ability to care for their child financially. Because Ted was born in Australia, Carmela and her husband decide he should bring the infant child with him to Hawai'i in order to establish the child's U.S. citizenship. In his desperation, Packard puts Ted into temporary foster care per the advice of the Philippine Consul General, a decision that would haunt the family for years. Once the pension is reinstated, the Packards work hard to re-establish custody, a difficult task across borders. Carmela cannot get a visa to come to Honolulu, a very common problem in the Philippines. She misses several

hearings, which makes her appear negligent to the Family Court. Two important scenes take place in the Honolulu courtroom itself, where Carmela must face accusations that she is incapable of standing up to her questionable husband and that she is an unfit mother, both due to her inferior, “uncivilized” cultural background. Ultimately Carmela loses her battle for her son and must return to the Philippines. In the final scene, she vows to her dying husband that she will continue to fight for custody until he is returned to the safety and freedom of the family’s ancestral lands.

One of the central themes in the play is how contemporary Filipinas still face great barriers in terms of societal gender norms. Many scenes depict the divisiveness within the Filipina organization where Zimmerman reveals how their gossiping (“tsismis”) and backbiting depend on the heteronorms of marriage, motherhood and “legitimate” children that have policed these women since childhood. Zimmerman makes clear that these oppressive attitudes are the result of being colonized and Christianized, a problem they share in common with Kānaka Maoli. In several scenes, Flora, one of Carmela’s fiercest defenders, confronts Mercedes for calling Carmela “a whore” for getting pregnant by a married man (201). Divisions also surface with regard to who is married, who is divorced, and who is a mother. These discussions of oppressive, internalized gender norms within the organization foreshadow the backwards gender norms Carmela must confront within the court system. As a bi-national couple, Carmela and her husband know they must marry in order to establish the “legitimacy” of Ted. But once in Hawai‘i, she is pressured to divorce him – an alleged criminal – in order to get her son back. The characters critique the “weird demands” put onto Carmela who must prove her observance of these heteronorms of Filipin@ society and the American family court system in order to keep her family together (214). Her struggle with the politics of respectability in and outside the

courtroom also foregrounds the violence of state borders in restricting immigration and separating families, in this case, permanently.

In addition to talking back against gender norms, Zimmerman critiques the racism targeting those of tribal heritage like Carmela and Flora. Again Zimmerman makes clear that colonial Christianity planted the seeds for these hatreds back in the Philippines. In one particularly shocking scene, Mercedes gives another reason why she doesn't think the group should support Carmela: "I suppose Igorots have different moral values from us. I remember what the nuns back home used to call them. They're pagans, illiterates, and headhunters who could not be converted to the Catholic faith" (253). The group members quickly jump in to remind Mercedes that Carmela "is a Filipina before she is anything else" (253). The group members' appeal to Filipin@ unity captures the extraordinary labor needed to uphold nationalist identity in a place as diverse as the Philippines, a nationalism made still more untenable in diaspora. Mercedes refers to Igorots as "pagans, illiterates, headhunters," a phrase that might appear on a placard at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair rather than a polite chat with the Philippine Consul General in 1997 Hawai'i. At that exhibition, tribal Filipin@s, Native Americans, and many other colonized peoples were put on display in a taxonomical human zoo, in an attempt – most scholars argue – to justify U.S. imperial ambitions across the Pacific.¹¹ Typically this language of a hierarchy of civilizations is evoked to remember how Americans racialized Filipin@s, but here Zimmerman exposes how anti-tribal racism and Christian supremacy interlock within Filipin@ communities. In doing so, she reminds Filipin@ audiences why Ifugao, Igorot and other mountain/tribal peoples have good reason to resist identification with the "postcolonial" Philippine nation-state. In combination with oppressive gender norms,

Zimmerman's depiction interrogates the multiple layers of exclusion a divorced, Ifugao woman like Carmela must combat both within the Philippines and in diaspora as well.

Zimmerman makes sure to give her audience/readers fiery opposition to these sexist, colonial attitudes. She positions the unflinching Flora to provide the clever retorts to the backward attitudes of Mercedes and the courts. Flora identifies as "half Ilokana/half Tinguian" and proudly defends all aspects of her genealogy. As a Tinguian person, Flora, like Carmela, has ancestral ties to the mountainous Cordillera region of Northern Luzon, a place whose people are sometimes described with the umbrella term "Igorot." In this scene, Flora elaborates on the common struggles between pre-colonial Igorots and Hawaiians with regard to colonial sexual norms.

FLORA

This discussion is getting rather stupid ...what I mean is not all human societies observe the same rules. Back home, the Igorots or mountain people do not have the same rules lowlanders have about sex.

MERCEDES

I suppose they behave like dogs; do it anywhere in public, out in the streets, anywhere when lust hits them.

FLORA

You have such a dirty mind, Mercedes. And you believe you are a good Catholic. As a matter of fact the early Hawaiians practiced sexual freedom *before* the puritan missionaries changed their behavior. Sex to them was a natural impulse, they were not constrained by artificial man-made restrictions. Catholics tend to view sex outside of marriage as dirty, and threatening to the control exercised by the church.

EVA

You're inventing that about the Hawaiians.

FLORA

You live in Hawaii. Do you know its history and its people at all, Eva? That's the problem with our ethnic group, so insular in outlook, so provincial.... (205)

In several scenes throughout the play, Flora is revealed as the most historically literate character, and the one most alert to issues of kuleana and *utang na loób*. It should be noted, however, that in the above scene, Flora makes two errors in this brief retelling of Hawaiian history. First, she locates agency solely with the missionaries, failing to recognize Hawaiians' agency under these conditions (missionaries "changed" Hawaiians' behavior). Second, she ignores that there were many examples of "man-made restrictions" (kapu) in Hawaiian society. Regardless, Flora's intention in this scene is clear and noteworthy from the standpoint of Indigenous solidarity; her key rhetorical strategy in defending Carmela is to disrupt anti-Igorot racism and anti-Hawaiian racism simultaneously. Additionally, she extols the virtues of Igorot and Hawaiian sexual norms ("natural impulse") over the "puritanical" ones of Christian missionaries ("sex outside of marriage is dirty") that Mercedes and Eva still depend on to establish their own privilege. For Flora, the church must be taken to task for its role in perpetuating patriarchal ideas about "proper" sexuality and the particularly damaging effects that caused for women. She uses the phrase "sexual freedom" thus pointing to a vision of a decolonized sexuality for Filipinas, in contrast with Mercedes' derision of Carmela ("that whore") and her animalizing notions of Igorot sexuality ("behave like dogs"). In short, she puts Hawaiian and Igorot colonial histories in conversation with each other, and even castigates Eva with a nascent appeal to settler kuleana:

“You live in Hawaii. Do you know its history and its people at all?” The message is that learning an Indigenous –centered history is necessary to live in Hawai‘i, especially considering Filipin@s have their own violent, anti-Indigenous history to unpack. In addition, Zimmerman’s centering of feminist issues underscores how Christian heteropatriarchy is inextricably a tool of colonial control in both Hawai‘i and the Philippines.

Zimmerman’s ability to recognize Filipin@-Hawaiian connections emerges once again in the courtroom scenes where U.S. family court system attempts to domesticate non-Western gender roles and parenting. While the play does not allude to boarding schools, sterilizations and other mechanisms of state control that have plagued Indigenous women’s lives, Carmela’s fight to re-establish parental rights recalls the struggles of the “stolen generations” in other settler colonial contexts like Australia and North America, especially because Ted was born in Australia. Zimmerman’s focus on the courtroom as a site of gendered colonial violence recalls feminist legal scholar’s Sharene Razack’s important work on the particular barriers facing Indigenous and other minoritized women in Canada. In *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms*, Razack’s critiques how the Western courtroom credits itself with “rescuing” Indigenous women from their “inferior” cultures. Razack argues that the court aims to position itself as the impartial arbiter of human rights, an innocent institution with regard to the past crimes against Indigenous or immigrant/refugee nations. She notes how often the court stigmatizes *culture* rather than *colonialism*, and requires that Indigenous women defend their peoples against stereotypes of an ahistorical cultural “barbarity” towards women and “underdevelopment” compared to Western standards (92).

Zimmerman critiques this same racism within the U.S. colonial courts in Hawai‘i through her portrayal of the biased, clueless judges. With every word, the judges conform to the white,

male hegemony that Razack describes. For example, the first judge scolds the visibly pregnant Carmela with “I will not allow unruly, emotional outbursts in my court” (209) as soon as she speak out of turn. His description of her as “unruly” and “emotional” is typical of the misogyny targeted at pregnant women. In two other scenes the judge flexes his colonial muscle by referring to Hawai‘i as “America”: “You are in America, Mrs. Packard. Our laws and our customs will prescribe what should be done for the child’s protection. In Hawaii, you will have to conform to our standards” (211). The voice of the American judge demanding conformity flies in the face of any romanticized notions of Hawai‘i as a melting pot paradise where everyone’s culture is respected. His words serve as a chilling reminder of the very real power he holds over the Packards’ family unity and the power the U.S. family courts can exercise over ‘Ōiwi and immigrant families in general. In another scene, the judge addresses Dr. Conchita Garcia, the Filipina child psychologist who defends the rights of both immigrant (Vietnamese, Filipin@, Micronesian) and ‘Ōiwi families to self-determination: “Young lady, this is an American court on American soil, and Carmela Packard has to act accordingly” (261-262). One of the challenges Carmela faces is the racist and sexist notion that she is more likely to be dominated by her husband, presumably because he is white and she is not. Ironically, with this last statement, the judge reveals his own domineering, sexist attitude by addressing Dr. Garcia, an adult professional, as “young lady.” At the end, the anti-Indigenous racism of the judge is made plain in his written decision when he argues that Carmela’s village is “not civilized, and is an unfit place ... to raise children” (218). Zimmerman’s depiction reveals how the court system casts Ifugao and other marginalized women as less-than-competent adults who must be protected by superior, American know-how. Although the judge makes no mention of Kānaka Maoli directly,

Zimmerman clearly exposes how the family courts – forever announcing themselves as enforcing “American” law on “American soil” – are an integral and *intimate* tool of the occupation.

Through her title character, Zimmerman shatters any notions of tribal peoples as stuck in a romantic, premodern past. Carmela is a determined character – the opening scene shows her picketing in front of the courthouse to regain custody – who goes to battle in the courtroom. As Carmela is one of the few Ifugao or Igorot women depicted in English-language literature, it might be that Zimmerman is theorizing a new kind of subjectivity through her title character. Even though she is a non-lawyer, Carmela proves herself capable of discussing legal matters with lawyers and judges, even while being interrogated on the stand. Even though she is married to a white American military person, she proves herself the head of her household by her ability to speak truth to power in the strongest terms: “I AM NOT AN UNFIT MOTHER” (Emphasis in original, 211). In this scene, she articulates herself with a clear sense of the merits of her own family, her culture, and the community connections that are foundational to proper Ifugao parenting norms:

RESPONDENT’S LAWYER

How do you both propose to support your son Ted if you get him back?

CARMELA

My husband’s pension of \$5,000 has been restored ... an income in dollars will stretch far in my country. I am a social worker, with a college degree. I have a job as a social worker in the province of Apayao, and I come from a family that has properties in Ifugao, a nearby province. Our tribal laws are strict about family obligations and protection of children. Because our son Ted was born out of wedlock, Philippine laws recognize illegitimate children legally follow the citizenship of his legally known parent. I am that parent. I have Philippine citizenship. (212-213)

Zimmerman's depiction of Carmela breaks new ground in several respects. She is proud of her Ifugao culture and the infamous rice terraces that are often characterized (in the play, but elsewhere too) as possessing the "ancient" knowledge of the Philippines' tribal peoples. At the same time, Carmela is a person recognizably "contemporary" to Westerners: she has earned a college degree; she has a professional job; and she's a property owner. As a social worker, Carmela knows the state system through which she has a job, as well as the Ifugao family system through which she raises her birth children and her stepchildren. She uses the word "illegitimate" without the self-consciousness of a woman who feels stigmatized by the Christian, heteronorms discussed earlier. It is clear she does not subscribe to patriarchal, colonial order that demands nuclear families, monogamous marriages, and "legitimate" children. To borrow from Razack again, Carmela can "look white people in the eye" with a deep confidence in her self, her family, and her culture.

Many scholars have argued a proper understanding of colonialism's reach cannot stop with land theft and resource extraction, but must extend into the realms of the intimate like gender and sexual expression, parenting, and family life.¹² For example, in "Navigating Our Own 'Sea of Islands': Remapping a Theoretical Space for Hawaiian Women and Indigenous Feminism," Lisa Kahaleole Hall explains the destructive patterns of colonialism as they impacted the intimate realm of Kanaka Maoli life:

Whatever the disagreements are about the nature of the precolonial status of women within various Indigenous societies, there is no ambiguity about the negative consequences of the views and actions of European missionaries, soldiers, and settlers.

The deliberate destruction of non-heteronormative and monogamous social relationships, the Indigenous languages that could conceptualize these relationships, and the cultural practices that celebrated them has been inextricable from the simultaneous colonial expropriation of land and natural resources (15-16).

With *Carmela*, Zimmerman offers a glimpse of two Indigenous societies, Ifugao and Hawaiian, both facing the kind of “deliberate destruction” that Hall describes. For Zimmerman, both the Church and the courts are held to account for their role in perpetuating colonialism and sexism in the name of “civilization” and “protection.” Sexuality is not always within marriage. Safety for children is not always achieved through state bureaucratic intervention. Hierarchies of “civilization” have tangible effects on families. Genuine self-determination must include the liberation of the gendered realm of the domestic, the intimate, and the body. Flora and Dr. Garcia’s impassioned pleas to reunite Carmela with her son do a service to both Filipin@s (especially those categorized as tribal or Indigenous Filipin@s) as well as Hawaiians. Zimmerman seems to be arguing through Flora, Carmela and Dr. Garcia that no battle against anti-Filipin@ racism in Hawai‘i would be complete without aligning ourselves with the Indigenous people of Hawai‘i and their much longer battle against injustice in their own home. It is an emergent solidarity made possible through Zimmerman’s emphasis of the intimate side of imperial violence.

There is another way that *Carmela* might be read as offering a nascent message of solidarity with Hawaiian struggle. As mentioned before, Zimmerman’s play was published two years after Victoria Nalani Kneubuhl’s *Trial of a Queen: 1895 Military Tribunal*. These plays share many things in common as stories of Indigenous women who were put on trial by the

American “justice” system. In addition to the literal courtroom trial, both these women faced the court of public opinion in terms of media representation. Noenoe Silva has written about the racist cartoons of Lili‘uokalani who was portrayed as a “pickaninny” incapable of self-government just as President Emil Aguinaldo of the Philippines was similarly subjected (177-178). Zimmerman’s play opens with a discussion of a newspaper article on Carmela, and whether this portrayal is an accurate measure of her competency as a mother. The discourses of Christian civilization that target tribal Filipin@s in *Carmela* (“pagans, illiterates, headhunters”) were also leveled at Lili‘uokalani, who was also called a “savage,” despite her Christian upbringing. Another interesting similarity is the Filipina women in the play who support Carmela solicit hundreds of signatures from the community, much like the real-life women portrayed in Kneubuhl’s play who were the backbone of Kū‘ē petition drive. If the courts and the press represent white male political hegemony, the gathering of signatures represents the political agency of women organizing at the grassroots. As Indigenous women married to white men, both Carmela and Lili‘uokalani proved they were in no way dominated by their husbands. Both these women can be said to be heading mixed heritage, non-normative families as they were both also stepmothers to their husbands’ children. Both women had to face attacks on their cultures as “uncivilized,” a justification that meant the termination of the right to parent in one case, and the termination of the right to govern in the other. By putting these threats to Ifugao and Hawaiian sovereignty into conversation, Zimmerman also asks us to remember that any proper definition of self-determination must include reproductive and parenting justice, or the same colonial biases will persist unabated.

1998: Year of Multiple Annexations

I began the discussion of Zimmerman's 1997 *Carmela* by first putting the play into context alongside the important historical commemorations of the 1990s. If 1893 was a momentous year for Hawaiian history, and 1896 was equally important for Filipin@ history, 1898 was undoubtedly the year to bring both histories into conversation. In 1898, the United States went to war with Spain, and annexed the former Spanish colonies: Philippines, Guåhan, Puerto Rico and Cuba. Five years of debates in Washington following the unauthorized overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy resulted in the Newlands Resolution, which in effect, resulted in the U.S. annexing Hawai'i as well. In that pivotal year, the Philippines and Hawai'i became acquainted with each other and with U.S. military power like never before. Hawai'i became the place where the U.S. trained its troops and refueled its ships for both its wars in the Philippines. In this way, Hawaiian land helped launch the military conquest of the Philippines, and the Spanish American war in the Philippines provided the pretext for annexation of Hawai'i. Later, in 1906, the war-ravaged Philippines became the place where the U.S. recruited for its plantations in Hawai'i; in this way, Filipin@ labor fueled the intensification of plantation capitalism in Hawai'i. In short, Filipin@ and Hawaiian histories are very much linked. Decolonial Filipin@s in Hawai'i would seldom get as timely or as profound an historical reminder that Filipin@s and Hawaiians share a common enemy as they had in 1998. Unfortunately, from what I have been able to gather, Hawai'i's theater community did not seize the opportunity to put our colonizations into conversations. There were journalists and academics making important interventions, but in terms of performance, no one was talking about the 1998 annexations as the transnational catastrophe that it represented.¹³

For Hawaiians, 1998 provided the bittersweet opportunity to commemorate the U.S. annexation of Hawai'i, while also educating the public on the suppressed history of 19th century

Hawaiian resistance. In 1997 Noenoe Silva found the 1897 Kū‘ē Petitions in Washington D.C. Over 36,000 signatures had been gathered to urge the U.S. to reverse the overthrow and prevent annexation. In 1998 she made them available for the first time to the public in Hawai‘i and they quickly became known as “the most significant discovery of the 20th century for Kānaka Maoli” (Silva 308).¹⁴ The Annexation Centennial Commemoration Committee organized a march and rally at ‘Iolani Palace on August 11 and 12, 1998 and the petitions were put on display at the state capitol. This allowed Kānaka Maoli and other descendants of the kingdom to see the proof of their ancestors’ opposition for the first time. The display of the Kū‘ē petitions remains a key strategy of the contemporary sovereignty movement, both to make visible the long history of resistance as well as to provide education on the illegality of the annexation.¹⁵ Also bittersweet was Victoria Knuebuhl’s production *Ho‘ohui ‘Āina: The Annexation Debate*, which was actually written in consultation with Silva and celebrated historian Tom Coffman, author of the 1998 *Nation Within: The History of the American Occupation of Hawai‘i* (Looser 96). Once again Knuebuhl impressed audiences with her ability to bring history to life, in this case the arguments that took place in Congress in the years leading up to the annexation, as well as the voices of Hawaiian patriots like James Keauliluna Kaulia and Emma ‘A‘ima Nāwahī.

1898 was also a pivotal year in Philippine history, and like Kānaka Maoli, Filipin@s in Hawai‘i were eager to foreground their own proud history of resistance. However, those audiences eager to see Filipin@ and Hawaiian anti-colonial resistance stories dramatized together would be disappointed, even in the deeply significant year. On June 12, 1898 General Aguinaldo declared Philippine independence from Spain, thus ending over 300 years of colonial oppression. Unfortunately, by December 10 of that same year, the United States would “purchase” the Philippines from Spain for \$20 million. The Philippines, already devastated by

war with Spain, would now go to war with the U.S., its new colonial oppressor, resulting in the death of hundreds of thousands, perhaps as many as two million. This has always been an uncomfortable, even dangerous history for Filipin@ communities in the United States to tell. While the Philippine Centennial Committee of Hawai‘i would present the events of 1898 through an anti-colonial lens, the focus was undoubtedly nationalist in nature. In other words, little to no connection would be made between the Filipin@ and Hawaiian struggles for sovereignty. For example, the Bishop Museum hosted “Filipino Americans of Hawai‘i: A Celebration of Courage, Service and Achievement,” its first Filipin@ exhibit in 17 years. Importantly, that exhibit included discussion of the Filipin@ American War, and ends with chronology of the waves of Filipin@ migration to Hawai‘i, but there was little to suggest that linking decolonial struggles was the purpose of the exhibit, despite the fact that Bishop is considered a heritage museum for Hawaiians.¹⁶

The Katipunan Club at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa held a production of Filipin@ revolutionary songs called “Pag-ibig sa Tinubuang Lupa” (Tagalog for “Love for the Native Land”), a performance which Rod Labrador described as a key site of anti-colonial Filipin@ identity making: “The public performance is an identity act in which Philippine history is reframed as a history of resistance, highlighting opposition to Spanish, American, and Japanese colonialism. The net effect of this reframing or retelling of Philippine history is the reinscription of Filipino agency, where they are no longer simply victims or passive subordinates willingly consenting to external imperial domination and being lulled into inaction by colonial mentality” (91). Labrador argues these “identity acts” perform a critical function in getting an unrepresented community’s stories told. Like *Peregrinasyon*, they are rare opportunities for Filipin@s to see their history told in a decolonial context. But I argue there would be few opportunities as ripe as

1998 to bring to the stage the stories of *shared trauma* that 1998 represents to the people of Hawai‘i and the Philippines, as well as the impacts for Guåhan, Cuba, and Puerto Rico too.¹⁷

2000s – A new century for Filipin@s in Hawai‘i

The anti-colonial ruptures that marked Hawai‘i in the 1990s continued into the first decade of 21st century alongside the increasing awareness that U.S. imperialism – from the Philippines, to Hawai‘i, and the Middle East – was more voracious than ever. After 9/11, the U.S. increased military funding to unprecedented levels in both Hawai‘i and the Philippines, and military recruitment intensified throughout the American-occupied Pacific to fight imperialist wars in the Middle East. Memories of Pearl Harbor were used to bolster Hawai‘i’s support for the “Wars on Terror,” considered the last attack “on American soil.”

The early 2000s brought serious controversies and legal set backs, including the highly divisive Akaka Bill that aimed to establish federal recognition for Native Hawaiians with the United States, but that independence advocates countered is not the same as de-occupation, land restoration, and restitution. In 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Rice v. Cayetano* that Hawaiians could not have their own elections for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), opening the door for more anti-Hawaiian legal attacks. In 2000 *Arakaki v. Lingle*, the courts ruled that non-Hawaiians could run for OHA. Central to the court’s thinking was the notion that defending Hawaiian claims against a settler colonial majority amounted to a race-based election. In her analysis of these cases, Melody Kapilialoha MacKenzie writes:

In an opinion that minimized the importance of State and Federal reconciliation efforts, including the 1993 Congressional Apology Resolution, and ignored the overwhelming vote by Hawai‘i’s multiracial citizenry to establish OHA, the

majority in *Rice* distorted Hawaiian history. According to the *Rice* court, Native Hawaiians are a defeated people overcome by historical circumstance and civilization, a fate that must now simply be accepted. (89)

These court cases have left Kanaka Maoli more vulnerable to other legal challenges by U.S. courts to delegitimize Indigenous claims in Hawai‘i.

Sovereignty movement efforts outside the courtroom, while not as massive as those of the 1990s, gained in momentum. A key site of struggle has been food sovereignty, specifically the protection of stream flows for kalo (taro) farming. Two long fought legal battles at Waiāhole on O‘ahu (2000, 2006) and Nā Wai ‘Ehā on Maui (2004) resulted in substantial restoration of stream flows, despite entrenched opposition by state and corporate actors. In 2001, the documentary *Ke Kulana He Māhū* (dir. Kathryn Xian and Brent Anbe) was released, drawing connections between Western colonialism and the destruction of Kanaka Maoli ways of life with regard to gender and sexuality. In 2004, Noenoe Silva released her watershed book *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* where she talks about the Kū‘ē petitions. More people became involved in restoring Kaho‘olawe, and protecting iwi kupuna (ancestral remains) that are often desecrated by development.

While undoubtedly Filipin@s in Hawai‘i had a range of reactions to these movements, the most noticeable Filipin@ organizing was directed at two efforts. The first was the building of community centers: The Filipino Community Center on O‘ahu in 2002, and the Binhi at Ani (Tagalog for “Seed and Harvest”) Community Center on Maui in 2005. For many these community centers represent the tangible evidence, like Cayetano’s governorship, that the Filipin@ community in Hawai‘i “had arrived” like the Japanese Americans and other more established immigrants. Many community leaders like Eddie Flores (co-founder of the popular

franchise L&L restaurant chain), felt that such a building was an important investment in community pride, especially given Filipin@s rise to be the third and eventually second largest ethnic group in Hawai‘i. The second major effort of the decade was the centennial celebration(s) of the *sakadas*’ arrival. Once again the Bishop Museum sponsored an exhibit, “Sentenaryo: 100 Years of Filipinos in Hawai‘i and Beyond.” In Kaua‘i a concrete marker was put near the site of the 1924 Hanapepe Massacre (Chang). These events and celebrations were positive in that they helped to centralize the working class struggle that has characterized and continues to characterize Filipin@ life in Hawai‘i. The 2000s were also marked by many closures of sugar and pineapple plantations, which led to productive conversations on the human and environmental costs of monocrop agribusiness that had dominated Hawai‘i’s economy for more than a century.

Overwhelmingly, the commemorative speeches, documents, and performances leading up to the climactic December 2006 celebration conformed to the tropes so often used by settlers to describe Hawai‘i like “paradise,” “American soil,” and “land of immigrants.” Many of these events were sponsored by corporations, banks and the economic elite, so it is perhaps unsurprising that the overarching discourse was, as Rod Labrador has argued, a developmental narrative of past *sakada* sacrifice rewarded with a middle-class American future. The Centennial Celebration Committee published a glossy souvenir book for the festivities sponsored by First Hawaiian Bank. The centerfold timeline begins with 1898 and details the historical colonialism that Filipin@s experienced in Philippines, not the present-day colonial reality they entered into in Hawai‘i. To her credit, veteran broadcast journalist Emme Tomimbang’s full-length documentary, *Mabuhay with Aloha: the Hawai‘i Filipino Experience (1906-2006)* includes reference to Jose Libornio, Manila-born composer who led the Royal Hawaiian Band and in

1894 composed the Hawaiian protest anthem “Kaulana Nā Pua” in partnership with celebrated poet and songwriter Ellen Keho‘ohiwaokalani Wright Prendergast to express loyalty to Lili‘uokalani.¹⁸ This song is a profound yet little known gesture of Filipin@ affirmation of Hawaiian sovereignty and an important interruption of the settler historiography that would position the overthrow as “prehistory” to Filipin@s’ arrival in Hawai‘i.

One sign that decolonial solidarity was building in the Filipin@ community was the conference at UH Mānoa that year. In December 2006, UH Mānoa’s Center for Philippines Studies held a conference to celebrate the centenary. Of 36 panel discussions, four included some discussion of the connections between Hawai‘i and the Philippines. These included “From Nations to Territories: Hawaii, the Philippines and the U.S. Empire in the Pacific” (Panel chaired by Vina Lanzona); Hawaii and Philippines in 1898 – Tom Coffman’s *Nation Within* (Chaired by Sheila Forman); Charting the Future and Strengthening Links Between Hawaii and the Philippines (paper by Geri Marullo), and “Philippines in Hawaii: Education in Colonial Times” (paper by Anthony Medrano). Despite the strangely titled conference “The Filipino Century Beyond Hawai‘i,” these four panels suggest that more seeds were being planted within the Filipin@ community to nurture the connections between the two colonizations.

Given the focus on the *sakadas*’ arrival, the 2006 celebrations would demonstrate little awareness of other connections between anticolonial Filipin@s and Hawaiians. With regard to performance, even Virgilio Menor Felipe’s scathing anti-imperialist play *To the U.S. with Mabuhay and Aloha: A Multicultural Play* (1998) which was produced in 2006 by The Actor’s Group at Pearl City Cultural Center, makes barely a mention of Hawai‘i and has no Hawaiian characters. Dr. Aurelio Agcaoili’s *Brown Land, Red Land* a bilingual play published in the 2006 Ilokano Language Program’s bilingual literary journal *Ani- Harvest: Koleksion Dagiti Sarita*,

Daniw, Salaysay ken Dadduma Pay a Sinurat: (Collection of Personal Narratives, Poetry, Essays, Fiction, a Play, and a Film Review): Hawai'i Filipino Centennial Issue makes no mention of the specific concerns of the people of Hawai'i, referred to here as the "Red Land." These very absences illuminate how rare and important an intervention Apostol makes with *Who the Fil-Am I?*

From Anthems to Water Wars: Troy Apostol's *Who the Fil Am I?*

On the surface, Troy Apostol's *Who the Fil-Am I?* does not seem to depart far from the conservative narratives that the centennial committee was promoting in 2006. The play was produced in 2006 at Honolulu's Kumu Kahua to coincide with the centennial anniversary. The question in the title suggests this play is about identity formation, a familiar topic in Filipin@ American literature, but with a Hawai'i twist. The play tells the story of Tomas, Malcom and Roland, three 20-something Filipinos from Hawai'i making a trip to the Philippines. Tomas knows the most language and history, but his travel mates resent his unsolicited advice and superiority complex. Malcom mocks (Uncle) Tomas' assimilation, preferring to listen to gangster rap and chase girls. Roland is the cool-headed surfer who serves as mediator in the many conflicts that erupt between the other two. The white-acting Filipino playing foil to the black-acting Filipino was a familiar trope we used to satirize in my *Tongue in a Mood* days, but Apostol creates something unique with the character of Roland. Indeed it is through this character that Apostol demonstrates an emergent solidarity through this character's insightful observations about the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. Where Zimmerman lays the groundwork for solidarity through a focus on decolonizing parenting and sexuality, *Who the Fil Am I?* builds solidarity by beginning with important questions pertaining to the overthrow and

occupation, then by drawing parallels between the water wars in the Cordillera region and the struggle for water by kalo (taro) farmers throughout Hawai‘i.

With the opening scene “Anthems,” Apostol foregrounds questions of nationalism, and references a trope used in “Pilipino Cultural Nights” (PCNs), the Filipin@ American educational variety shows very popular on many California university campuses. PCNs usually begin with the U.S. and Philippine flags aligned side by side and the two national anthems playing. Theodore S. Gonzalves explains how the flags-and-anthems set up has become a predictable staple of the PCN genre: “The presentation of both national anthems and the flags at the opening of the PCNs suggest that the U.S. Philippine relations have been unambiguous and resolved with the granting of independence, despite what one scholar has referred to as their ‘entangling’ for most of the twentieth century” (118). Gonzalves’ book *The Day the Dancers Stayed: Performing in the Filipino/American Diaspora* explores how PCNs have been guilty of perpetuating flawed histories and even orientalist depictions of Filipin@ culture and are thus ripe for revision, critique and parody.

Perhaps Apostol had Gonzalves’ book in mind when he evoked the familiar beginning, as *Who the Fil-Am I?* begins with *three* flags and *three* national anthems: Tomas sings “Bayang Magiliw,” for the Philippines, Malcom sings “The Star Spangled Banner,” for the U.S., and Roland sings “Hawai‘i Pono‘ī” for Hawai‘i. The inclusion of this third element signals a recognition that Hawai‘i, like the Philippines, is a country of its own, not the “Aloha state” as America would prefer to imagine it. Although it can be argued that “Hawai‘i Pono‘ī” has been appropriated as the state anthem for the settler state, Apostol makes clear that the relationship between these three nations is anything but “unambiguous and resolved,” to use Gonzalves’ language. The stage direction reads: “It becomes a cacophonous anti-anthem as they argue in

song, climaxing into a yelling match of anthem lyrics” (2). “Cacophonous anti-anthem” suggests these three nationalisms compete with each other for dominance over these three characters’ emerging political subjectivity. Rather than rehearse the too-familiar angst of diasporic / postcolonial identity formation (“Am I Filipin@ or am I American?”) implied by the title, this scene points to the question of *political allegiance* in a *settler colonial context*. Filipin@s in Hawai‘i are not just indifferent spectators to this battle over Hawaiian land, but caught and confused by this maelstrom of competing discourses.

After the anthems, Tomas, Malcom and Roland introduce themselves to the audience, reflecting on what they have been taught to think about these three nations:

TOMAS

I remember looking at the Philippine flag and thinking to myself that my parents once pledged their allegiance to this flag. To these people. To this land.

MALCOM

When I think of the American flag, I’m thinkin’ 50 stars for 50 states, and 13 stripes for 13 colonies. Red for the blood that was shed, blue for freedom as wide as the mo-fuckin’ sky, and white for... (touches his skin).

ROLAND

Ho, when I see da Hawaiian flag, all I can remembah from school is Captain Cook and da ovatrow. I was nevah real certain about da British paht of da flag, but I do remembah da flag was always put lowah on da pole.

TOMAS

In the Philippine flag I see the sun, 3 stars, and the same three colors as the American and Hawaiian flag, red white, and blue. I am pretty sure it has

something to do with the Spanish colonization and even the American influence.
All I do know is that...

MALCOM

...I remember lookin' at the American flag and thinkin'...

ROLAND

...my parents pledged dea allegiance to dis flag.

TOMAS

To these people.

MALCOM

To this land. (2)

It is not unusual in the PCN genre to critique the white supremacy of the U.S. as Malcom does, or to discuss Spanish and American colonization (here re-framed as “American influence”) as Tomas does. What stands out in this scene are Roland’s lines, specifically his careful observations about the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom. This is the scene when the audience is introduced to the characters for the first time, so it’s refreshing that Apostol chooses to focus on an Indigenous-centered Hawaiian history, not a Filipin@s-in-Hawai‘i history one might expect, especially in 2006. Seeing the Hawaiian flag “lowah on da pole” is a nonissue for those who accept that Hawai‘i is the 50th state, but clearly Roland does not. He questions the Americanized education he received in Hawai‘i, and remains confused by what he learned (“I was nevah real certain...”). Also notable is that Roland speaks Hawai‘i Creole English (“pidgin”) but not because he is trying to disguise his Filipino identity with a Hawaiian one, and not because his character must provide comic relief, but because he grew up in Hawai‘i and does not

need to pretend otherwise.¹⁹ In his final line of this scene, he says his parents “pledged dea allegiance to dis flag” suggesting that his parents were in some way sympathetic to Hawaiian independence. Rather than directing his attention to his internal conflicts as a bicultural person, he contemplates where to lay his allegiances given that he was born on seized land. Considering that the play was written in the centennial anniversary of the *sakadas*’ arrival, one might assume that at least one of these characters would be ruminating on the proud labor struggles of his ancestors. Actually, the play makes no mention of *sakadas* at all. Instead what we learn about these characters’ genealogy has more to do with political affiliation given their ancestors’ anti-colonial battles, and ongoing occupation of Hawai‘i by that same colonizer. Roland comes from a Filipin@ family that has pledged their allegiance to the Hawaiian nation (a choice he understands and validates), and he recognizes the wrongs that the U.S. has committed in Hawai‘i. We don’t know exactly what he will do with this information, but his ability to articulate these anti-colonial connections points his character and the play as a whole toward an emergent solidarity.

Filipin@-Hawaiian connections are made explicit through the theme of water, which progresses subtly in the play from a discussion of water for leisure, to water for agriculture, and eventually water as a site of (armed) struggle. After the opening scene, Roland gives a monologue about surfing, and the spiritual transcendence he feels when he’s on the ocean: “Wave aftah wave, surfing all day, until I see da sunset sparkling ova da crystal cleah ocean. I tink dat stay da bes’ part of da day, wen God shines his rays of light on me, saying he’s always been right dea wit me da whole time...” (3). Surfing, a sport that was invented by Hawaiians, is central to Roland’s tranquil peace of mind as he manages the many challenges on this first trip to the Philippines. This is also his first trip anywhere outside Hawai‘i and he makes clear that he

never intends to leave the place he was born and raised: “Why would you want to live anywheah oddah dan Hawaii?” (10). Although he comes from a large, working-class family, he seems untroubled by money worries, and mentions no problems with accessing the water necessary for his favorite sport. Once in Manila, he sees street children entertaining themselves in the water, a scene which contrasts sharply with his own experience on the ocean: “On da way back from da mall, I saw da trippiest ting. It was still raining, so da sewahs on da sides of da street was ovaflowing... All of a sudden, dis little kid jumps into da watah like he stay at da beach!” (19-20). The trio are shocked to see the poverty in the Philippines up close, from the squatter areas that stretch for miles to the young girls weaving through traffic to sell flowers, but none seem as devastating as this scene of children who must improvise a playground in the rainwater that spills out through the overflowing sewers. Through the contrast of these leisure activities, Apostol demonstrates how access to water is not just a marker of class, but a stark measure of the structural inequalities perpetuated through global capitalism and the postcolonial state’s neoliberal priorities.

When the three arrive in Banaue, the discussion of water surfaces in the characters’ observation of traditional agriculture, through which Apostol builds a trans-Indigenous connection between Kanaka Maoli and Ifugao farming. Banaue is a province in the Cordillera mountain region made famous by the Ifugao rice terraces, the same terraces that appear in the final scene of *Carmela*. The majesty of this UNESCO world heritage site leaves Malcom awestruck: “Damn, this is the most beautiful thang I ever seen in my life. As far as the eye can see, rice terraces extending upwards towards the heavens. Kinda reminds me of Hawaiian lo‘i; testimonial to the power of human will” (30). Although this moment is brief, Malcom’s comment puts the genius of the rice terraces alongside the genius of the lo‘i kalo, or ponds for cultivating

kalo (taro). Kalo is the most significant plant in Hawaiian culture and cosmology, appearing in the Kumulipo, the Hawaiian creation chant, as the eldest brother of the Hawaiian people. It's the tuber from which poi is made, and both were staples of the Hawaiian diet before the American oligarchy redirected water for the plantation economy, a problem that remains today. Through his comment about the rice terraces and lo'i kalo, Malcom demonstrates that, like Roland, his points of comparison are all from the specific location of Hawai'i where he grew up, a place that is distinctly not "America." Similarly Roland makes favorable comparisons between the rural lifestyles in Sagada (another Cordillera province) and Moloka'i, two places where Indigenous (agri)culture remains strong: "I can see my neighbahs in da faces of da villigahs. And dis place, Sagada, reminds me of Moloka'i. Poor but real. Simple but happy. Dis stay da firs' time in da Philippines dat I can really breathe" (30). In contrast with the 2006 Centennial Celebration's focus on projecting a bourgeois image of "success" via the erection of big community centers with colonial architecture, Apostol presents an entirely different set of values. Here success is measured through the genius of sustainable water management and a respectful relationship to land or 'āina (literally, "that which feeds"). These are communities that know their kuleana, their relationship to the ancestors, and to the land that feeds them.

Going to the "motherland" to connect with one's ancestors in the "authentic" rural areas is a problematic cliché that Fanon warned of, but Apostol disrupts any sentimentality by addressing the urgent, complex political stakes for farmers at both sites. In this scene, the three characters hears the sound of gunshots, which reminds them that this beautiful land is the site of a war zone:

ROLAND

Brah, one of da villigahs told me stay one tribal war going on.

TOMAS

3 clans fighting over water. There's one main stream running through all 3 tribal lands supplying water for their rice terraces. It's their life's blood.

ROLAND

Kinda like wen back in Oahu, wen peoples was fighting ovah da Waiahole stream.

TOMAS

But there they duked it out in district court. Here, the tribes are the law. (34)

Again Apostol's comparative references are fleeting but form a deeply significant thread demonstrating of Hawai'i –Philippine decolonial connections. The gun shots refer to the 2005 tribal water war in Sagada which involved an armed dispute between several Cordillera villages who had been under increasing pressure from earthquakes, uncontrolled tourism, deforestation, and climate-change induced drought (Baguilat et al., "Drought Ravages"). In 2001, UNESCO added the Banaue rice terraces to the list of World Heritage Sites in Danger. The comparison with Waiāhole dispute is imperfect, as Tomas points out, in that the colonial court system presides over the disputing parties in Hawai'i, but in the Cordillera "the tribes are law," and several people have lost their lives in that war. But Roland's comment has merit in one respect. In the Waiāhole struggle, the disputing parties included Hawaiians on both sides, just like the water war in Sagada has Ifugao on both sides. Kalo farmers suing for stream restoration for the Windward side of O'ahu had to face a well-funded coalition of golf course, housing, and agricultural interests that included Kamehameha Schools ("Hawai'i Water Commission"). In other words, Apostol subtly reminds us of a complicated truth: sometimes Indigenous people and their allies find themselves fighting other Indigenous people in order to preserve an Indigenous way of life. Much as non-farmers and tourists might romanticize the rice terraces and lo'i kalo as

sites of ancestral genius and ethnic pride, their value is not only symbolic. They are sites of food production and they require water and land. This is why food independence has become a key strategy in the Hawaiian sovereignty movement and other movements elsewhere to revive and sustain Indigenous land management techniques. Such efforts are vulnerable to external attack by powerful financial and environmental forces, which can easily create the conditions for internal division.

Given that *Who the Fil-Am I?* was staged in 2006 as part of the centennial celebration of the *sakadas*' arrival, it seems strange that Apostol includes no mention of plantation life or labor struggle in the play. Many of the commemorative images produced in that year like the cover of the Centennial Committee's Program Book or the documentary *From Mabuhay to Aloha: The Hawai'i Filipino Experience* feature *sakadas* either leaving the Philippines or working on the plantations in Hawai'i. As Rod Labrador has pointed out in *Building Filipino Hawai'i*, the dominant narrative starts with and depends upon the *sakadas*' sacrifice: i.e. their hard work to overcome racism and exploitation laid the groundwork for our present (alleged) bourgeois success. Too often these narratives rely on clichéd notions of the "pull" factors of migration like American adventure and new opportunities, without sufficient analysis of the "push" factors of migration like Filipino land dispossession, colonialism and war. In this way, Apostol's intervention offers something thought-provoking by reminding audiences in Hawai'i that one, migration is *not* always beautiful, and two, the Philippines is an important site of decolonial knowledge with regard to land and water struggle. In other words, perhaps Apostol is addressing a gap in representation. There is already ample proof of Filipin@ activist courage in protecting workers' rights, but fewer images are available in Hawai'i of Filipin@s as protectors of water, land and sacred sites.

While it is good to emphasize the plantations' role in exploiting labor, Apostol subtly reminds us that we must also include in our analysis the role of plantations exploiting the land and water too. Many times Filipin@s find themselves working for corporations, but that is not representative of all Filipin@s relationship with land and water. Too often in Hawai'i contemporary politics, "Hawaiian issues" and "Filipin@ issues" do not always intersect, and at times seem at cross-purposes. Many immigrant farmworkers in Hawai'i, many of whom are Filipin@s, work for the agribusinesses and hotels that fight to wrest precious water resources from small-scale kalo farmers, many of them Hawaiians. But in this play, audiences are urged to consider how Filipin@s might build decolonial alliances: we must remember our own connection to our own sacred sites. Just as we must honor and protect our sacred rice terraces in the Philippines, we must honor and protect the lo'i kalo in Hawai'i. We must find ways to unite the cause of labor justice with Indigenous land and water rights. If we can foreground the genius of our anti-colonial modes of survivance – both through the design of our families and the design of our water systems – we have multiple modalities through which to build sustainable, decolonial futures. It's these examples of emergent solidarity that Hawai'i stages need more than ever.

Land-Based Visions of Decolonial Futures

For this last section, I turn to the provocative endings of the plays that both offer land-based visions of decolonial futures. In the final pages of *Carmela*, the members of the Filipina organization are disheartened to learn the courts decided to sever parental rights and let Ted's foster parents adopt him. This begins a discussion of corruption in the court system and Hawai'i's political culture in general. Flora, usually the first one to offer insightful analysis, is

speechless with anger. Emilia remarks to Flora that even when due process has been violated, a judge cannot challenge the decision of another judge, especially one with powerful political connections (267). Menchu, one of the minor characters who is described simply as a “local born Filipina who is an advocate for Carmela,” makes the expository final speech:

Those elected are either spokesman for insurance companies, powerful banks, or labor unions. If they managed to get in on pure luck they usually end up puppets of the hotel industries, or they’re powerless without somebody’s patronage. Do you suppose even our Filipino governor is a token leader, controlled by powerbrokers in the Democratic Party? (267)

Zimmerman was one of Cayetano’s harshest critics, but through Menchu she expands from a critique of an individual to a critique that includes all branches of mainstream political power: the government, corporations, and unions, too. In light of the court’s bias against Carmela’s culture, Emilia suggests they rethink the purpose of their organization: “Perhaps move on to not just promoting Filipino culture, but also to defending our culture, our women as well, when necessary” (268). As the members of the organization debate what to do next, Zimmerman prompts her reader/audience to wrestle with these questions of (settler) state power too. When the corruption of the system is made known to us, how do we defend our most vulnerable? How do we fight against cynicism? Where do we begin?

Zimmerman offers an answer in the final moments of the play. Lester Packard is dying with Carmela and their children crying around his deathbed. It’s not clear whether Ted will ever be reunited with his siblings and the family land. Carmela vows to continue to fight for custody, and comforts her dying husband with this idyllic vision of their family reunited once more, which contrasts so strongly with the cynicism of the previous scene:

(Carmella waves her hand, and drums start playing, while surrounding the stage are scenes of the mountain region where the family lives. The scenery is beautiful, the trees and plant life are lush. Scenes showing the rice terraces follow and a boy who looks like Ted briefly shows his face, turns his back to the audience, jumps, runs, and with open arms joyfully embraces the beautiful environment he is exposed to.) (269)

The rice terraces are the only mention of land in the play, so it's significant that Zimmerman chooses to leave audiences with this image. The Banaue rice terraces provide more than a backdrop or a landscape. The terraces represent a society that is properly organized: green space is preserved and kept beautiful, food is grown in traditional methods on the land, and perhaps most importantly, it is the place where children are safe and free to run unattended. On one level, it's a vision of a single family reunited again; it's also about Filipin@s in diaspora not giving in to American bourgeois models of success, and remaining "grounded" in the land-based wisdom the Philippines has to offer. For Zimmerman, those conditions are what form the bedrock of a truly "civilized" culture, one that may or may not still be possible for Filipin@s in Hawai'i to know or experience, but one that deserves to be defended.

Who the Fil-Am I? includes scenes of the Banaue rice terraces too, but the play ends with the three characters learning other land-based lessons from the Sacred Caves in Sagada. Although the specific cave is unnamed, this is likely the legendary Pamitinan Cave where Andres Bonifacio and the Katipunan revolutionaries made their commitment to defeat the Spanish (Alfonso). Tomas explains the "Filipino freedom fighters" tested their initiates by blindfolding them and sending them into the cave. Tired of the conflict that has plagued the trip, Tomas challenges his travel mates to a similar "test of faith": "We go in. Leave the lamp at the bottom.

We see who comes out. No cell phones. No nothing. Just our souls” (36). At first they are incredulous; Malcom asks “What is this, like Mākua Cave or something?” a comment which again puts Filipin@ and Hawaiian anti-colonial resistance side by side (35). (Nearby Mākua Valley has been used for decades by the U.S. military for bombing practice until Kānaka Maoli and demilitarization activists campaigned to protect it [Gonzalez 174]). Malcom and Roland agree to the test, but as they descend they quickly become dizzy. The darkness is frightening, and the water is freezing. Tomas slips and the lantern shatters; they don’t know how they will make it out. The trio start to panic and Apostol heightens the drama with two sounds: the “soul-chilling drip-drop of water” and guns firing from the tribal war outside (38). Inside the cave they are reminded of their revolutionary ancestors who fought a war to gain their freedom; outside the cave they are reminded of the present-day state of unfreedom that causes Indigenous Filipin@s to declare war on each other. Mākua recalls the sacred commitment to land back in Hawai‘i; Pamitinan recalls the sacred commitment to land in the Philippines. They may not have a Filipin@ organization through which to express themselves politically like the women in *Carmela*, but inside this cave, deep inside the land, there is hope that decolonial futures are incubating.

As Filipin@s in Hawai‘i interested in charting stronger political alliances with Indigenous struggle for self-determination and sovereignty, Zimmerman and Apostol’s interventions offer important lessons both in how they succeeded and how they failed as playwrights. This chapter would not be complete without at least a mention of those elements that might leave readers and audiences wanting. I offer these final thoughts in the spirit of encouraging other Filipin@ playwrights in Hawai‘i – myself included – to take up the pen and learn from their mistakes. With regard to *Carmela*, Zimmerman’s solidarity with Kānaka Maoli is undermined with the

portrayal of the unnamed Native Hawaiian foster mother. Zimmerman's portrayal comes dangerously close to the stereotype of a "welfare queen" who takes up fostering children because she is too lazy to get a job. Zimmerman's decision to have the foster mother rename Ted "Akina" needs justification also. Is the foster mother trying to hide his Filipino identity with a Hawaiian one? This is a confusing choice given the much more common problem of mixed race Filipinos (my family included) who give their children Hawaiian names to indigenize them. Zimmerman also pays an inordinate amount of time with the characters in the bourgeois women's organization, but so little time with Justo ("justice"), the spunky character from BIBAK (Benguet, Ifugao, Bontoc, Apayao, Kalinga tribal peoples), the group that "represents the mountain tribes in the Philippines" (196). The play would have been strengthened if Carmela, Justo and the foster mother could have figured out a solution together, one that puts the needs of the child at the center while honoring his cultural heritage. This could have opened up a productive trans-Indigenous conversation on settling custody battles outside the settler state(s). Audiences for *Who the the Fil-Am I?* might be confused without some mention of Apostol's critique of the colonial nature of tourism, even Fil-Am tourism, particularly as it intersects with prostitution of impoverished Filipinas. Like with Zimmerman's work, there are problems that deserve attention. Once they arrive in the Manila, the trio decides they will purchase sex in the Philippines, and a "boys will be boys" tone dominates these scenes. Then in the melodramatic subplot, Filomena, one of the strippers they meet in a "mamasan bar," discovers her husband wants to sell their daughter to a pimp. When his scheme is revealed, the unnamed character "Husband" kills himself. Perhaps Apostol means to castigate the Fil-Am characters for their cluelessness, "first world problems" and heteromale privilege, but he does not handle the "third world problems" and misogyny facing Filomena and her family with sufficient depth or nuance.

In a post-script to the cave scene, Filomena's daughter sits at a typewriter, making her dreams come true, but how she gets from A to Z is left to the audience's imagination. Apostol tries to take on class issues, a problem Zimmerman never touches, but his treatment of this complex material leaves much to be desired from a feminist and anti-capitalist point of view.

However, while reviewers of the play were generally lukewarm in their reception of the play, John Berger of the *Honolulu Star Bulletin* was exceedingly positive about the actress who played Filomena at Kumu Kahua: "[Jaedee-Kae] Vergara...changes the mood of this show from farce to drama with her first few words of dialogue. Her performance makes the fate of Filomena and her daughter of greater dramatic interest than the outcome of Malcom's interminable badgering of Tomas." It might be that these characters could offer more depth in the hands of the right actress, maybe making the misogyny of the male characters easier to stomach.

The review by Ryan Senaga in *The Honolulu Weekly* was the most positive about *Who the Fil-Am I?*: "The three main characters can be stereotyped as Filipinos who want to act like they are white, Hawaiian or black. And of course, things are not that simple when discussing ethnic identity. What the play does drive home is the idea of looking inside one's heart for one's identity. What truly matters is life, death and the choices one makes with the various possibilities and options that are encountered." I would argue that Apostol is doing much more than "looking inside one's heart for one's identity." This phrase suggests a navel gazing approach that Apostol does good work to critique. From the flag scene to the cave scene, these characters are examining their *choices* with regard to the hegemony of U.S. empire on the one hand, and the power of anti-colonial movements on the other. Similarly, Zimmerman gives us the unforgettable Flora who stands up for Indigenous people in both the Philippines and Hawai'i, especially women, and asks the quintessential ethical question of settlers: "You live in Hawaii. Do you know its history and

its people at all?” (205). Together these plays remind us to commit to the land we’re standing on, consider the lessons of the land our ancestors stood on, and let that combination transform our solidarity with both sites. As a writer/performer also interested in deepening my *utang na loób* / settler kuleana both on and off the stage, that’s not a bad place to start.

Notes

¹ Teatro Ng Tanan (Cebuano for “Theater for Everyone”) produced “Knight of the Broken” by Gary San Angel in May 1997 and August 1997. This one-act was directed by Agelio Batle. Tongue in a Mood produced “The Real Professor” and “PCN Salute” by Alan Manalo and Kevin Camia in December 1997. Both skits were part of a variety show directed by Alan Manalo.

² Mahalo to Kearny Street Workshops APAture Festival, LunaSea Women Performing Project, Asian American Theater Company, Latina Theater Lab, and writer / directors Emily Bender and Peter Tamaribuchi. If there were more space in this chapter, I would salute all of our work in more detail.

³ Decolonial Pin@ys was formed in 2014 to provide a space for Filipin@s in Hawai‘i to join together to discuss issues of Hawaiian sovereignty and our relationship to it. We have organized several public education events to bring awareness of U.S. empire as it affects both the Philippines and Hawai‘i and to strategize on ways that Filipin@s can be more effective allies. Our mission statement (still in progress): “We are committed to demilitarization, decolonization, healing and creative liberation. We believe that Filipinos can tap into their *lakas ng loob* (inner strength) to build allyship for a free and independent Hawai‘i. Like the Banyan tree with multiple roots, Filipinos in the diaspora remember our own resistance traditions in the Philippines to globalize love, liberation and connection.”

⁴ I will discuss the centennial commemoration of the 1898 U.S. annexations after the discussion of *Carmela*, which came out in 1997.

⁵ “The old democratic revolution which [Andres Bonifacio] led, was of great historical significance not only to the Filipino people but also to the people of Asia. It was the first bourgeois-nationalist revolution in Asia, foreshadowing the Chinese revolution in 1911, the Indonesian revolution of 1926, and 1945, the Indian national independence movement and so on” (80). *Jose Maria Sison: At Home in the World: Portrait of a Revolutionary*.

⁶ In my interview with Filipino American major general Antonio Taguba that I examine in chapter three, he refers to the war as an “insurrection,” a common though troubling imperial euphemism.

⁷ Jovita Rodas Zimmerman used the pen name “Tarossa Obispo” for the play. Her late husband Carl Zimmerman explained to me “Obispo” was her mother’s maiden name.

⁸ See the following excerpts, all in *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai‘i*, edited by Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Okamura. Haunani-Kay Trask’s “Settlers of Color and “Immigrant” Hegemony: ‘Locals’ in Hawai‘i,” (46-51); Candace Fujikane’s “Introduction: Asian Settler Colonialism in the U.S. Colony of

Hawai‘i,” (25-29); and Dean Saranillio’s “Colonial Amnesia: Rethinking Filipino ‘American’ Settler Empowerment in the U.S. Colony of Hawai‘i” (265-268).

⁹ See also Zimmerman’s *Hawaii’s Saints and Sinners: Will ‘Mana’ Stay with Cayetano?* and Dean Saranillio’s “Why Asian Settler Colonialism Matters” for more critiques of Cayetano from a Filipin@ in Hawai‘i perspective (280).

¹⁰ One of the central aims of my dissertation is to put the two colonialisms into conversation with each other, but finding the right terms to capture both nations is difficult. In this chapter, I use the term “Indigenous” to refer to both tribal Filipin@s and Kānaka Maoli, although there are limitations to this English language term. Zimmerman uses the terms “tribal,” “Ifugao,” and “Igorot” but never “Indigenous.” Apostol uses “tribal” in the dialogue, and “Igorot” to mark one of the unnamed characters. In “The Indeterminacy of the Philippine Indigenous Subject: Indigeneity, Temporality, and Cultural Governance,” Melisa Casumbal-Salazar argues Indigenous identity in the Philippines is fraught with inconsistent and contradictory political agendas, particularly in the post-colonial era. She notes that the term “Igorot” also has a complicated, contested genealogy that has been used in both colonial and anti-colonial contexts (“Unintelligible Bodies” 68). This complexity is apparent in *Carmela* also as the word “Igorot” is used as a slur by the racist Mercedes, and as a neutral, umbrella term by Flora, who is a tribal Filipina herself. Casumbal-Salazar argues it is better to honor the terms that people use to self-identify. In Hawai‘i, the term “tribal” is never used to describe Hawai‘i’s Indigenous people. The preferred terms are Kānaka Maoli, Kānaka ‘Ōiwi, or simply, Hawaiians.

¹¹ See Paul Kramer, “Making Concessions: Race and Empire Revisited at the Philippine Exposition, St. Louis, 1901-1905.”

¹² See Jacqui Alexander’s *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*, Silvia Federici’s *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*, Andrea Smith’s *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, Qwo-Li Driskill et al., *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*.

¹³ Two examples include: Davianna McGregor and several other UH Mānoa professors designed a ten-day curriculum for teachers entitled “1898-1998: Rethinking the U.S. in “Paradise,” sponsored by Hawaii Committee for the Humanities, American Friends Service Committee Pacific Program, the Ahupua‘a Action Alliance, and Pacific Resources for Education and Learning. Also, the Association for Asian American Studies held its annual conference in Honolulu in 1998 with a critical emphasis on “American Empire in the Pacific and Asia,” which was hosted by the Ethnic Studies Department at UH Mānoa.

¹⁴ Noenoe Silva writes about her experience researching the Kū‘ē Petitions in “Ke Kū‘ē Kūpa‘a Loa Nei K/Mākou (We Most Solemnly Protest): A Memoir of 1998,” published in *Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land and Sovereignty*.

¹⁵ The Newlands Resolution that allegedly cemented annexation never had enough votes, and was thus never ratified. For more information on this history, see Jennifer M.L. Chock. “One Hundred Years of Illegitimacy: International Legal Analysis of the Illegal Overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy, Hawai‘i’s Annexation, and Possible Reparations.” *University of Hawai‘i Law Review* 17 (1995): 492; Williamson B.C. Chang, “Darkness over Hawaii: Annexation Myth Greatest Obstacle to Progress,” *Asian-Pacific Law & Policy Journal* – University of Hawaii for Volume 16, Spring 2015.

¹⁶ Dean Alegado, Ethnic Studies professor and advisor to the exhibit, made these remarks to the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*: “Probably nothing short of a miracle could have prevented Hawai‘i and the Philippines being annexed by SOMEBODY. But it wasn’t a sure thing. The vote in Congress to annex the Philippines passed by only one vote. One vote a different way, and our history would be completely different.”

¹⁷ A truly transpacific decolonial politics would include the sovereign struggles of Sāmoa, annexed by the U.S. in 1899, as well as the struggles of the Marshallese people who were the subjects of U.S. nuclear testing, and other Federated States of Micronesia that came under U.S. control at the close of World War II. I remain hopeful that theater communities are increasingly positioning themselves to engage with these important and complex histories.

¹⁸ While there is no doubt that Ellen Keho‘ohiwaokalani Wright Prendergast wrote the lyrics for “Kaulana Nā Pua,” Amy Ku‘uleialoha Stillman argued in 1999 that there is room for debate as to whether Libornio was the composer of this important song or its arranger due to differences between U.S. and Hawaiian systems of citing musical copyright. Stillman does acknowledge that it is likely he was the composer based on the many pro-royalist compositions he wrote and that he toured with the Royal Hawaiian Band to raise money to support the queen’s restoration. In 2015, Nā Makamaka O Ka Pāna Ali‘i O Hawai‘i (The Friends of the Royal Hawaiian Band) were more definitive that Libornio was the composer: “In the wake of the Overthrow, the members of the Band refused to take the required oath of loyalty to the Provisional Government headed by Sanford Ballard Dole and the succeeding Republic of Hawai‘i. They preferred to ‘eat the mystical stones of the land’ in lieu of receiving salaries from a regime they intensively disliked. This inspired Ellen Wright Prendergast, a lady-in-waiting of the Queen, to write the lyrics to the song “Mele ‘Ai Pōhaku” or “Kaulana nā Pua” to which José Libornio, a Filipino, composed the music” (Schweizer 2).

¹⁹ In 2015, Hawaiian Creole English (HCE) was declared one of Hawai‘i’s official languages although those who speak it still face discrimination. HCE It is often referred to as “pidgin,” but technically a pidgin develops in situations where speakers of different languages need to communicate but don’t share a common language. The main vocabulary comes from the “lexifier” language, and the pidgin is used as a second language. A creole refers to that which is used as first language and mother tongue of a community. Like a pidgin, a creole is a distinct language taking vocabulary from a main lexifier, but that has its own unique grammatical rules and is not restricted in use. For more information, see Kent Sakoda and Jeff Siegel’s *Pidgin Grammar: An Introduction to the Creole English of Hawai‘i* and *Pidgin: The Voice of Hawai‘i*, Marlene Booth and Kanalu Young, producers.

CHAPTER 2

WEAVING OUR SOVEREIGNTIES TOGETHER:
MAXIMIZING ‘EA’ FOR FILIPIN@S AND HAWAIIANS

Everything I do here at Papahana Kuaola has been informed by the lessons I learned in the Philippines. 100%. — Kīhei Nahale-a

Activist research explicitly aims to contest existing relations of power and to envision and live new relations. — Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, *The Seeds We Planted: Portraits of a Native Hawaiian Charter School*

While much has been written about hegemonic constructions (“our new possessions”) of the five nations the U.S. conquered in 1898 – the Philippines, Hawai‘i, Guam, Puerto Rico and Cuba – considerably less has been written about how these sovereign peoples viewed each other’s struggles to defend themselves against U.S. empire.¹ As nearly 25%² of Hawai‘i’s current population claims Filipin@ descent, and the community has been settling in Hawai‘i for over 100 years, there have been numerous opportunities for Filipin@s to learn about and express solidarity with movements for Hawaiian sovereignty. This chapter asks: what about solidarity going the other direction?

In Summer 2015, I conducted a series of interviews with Kanaka Maoli independence activists about their visits to the Philippines. I began the project because I was interested in how the still-unfinished struggle for sovereignty in the postcolony of the Philippines may have influenced the contemporary struggle for sovereignty in the settler colony of Hawai‘i. Rather than having Filipin@s in Hawai‘i articulate the connections between our colonizations and

sovereignties (the legacy of 1898, the presence of the military bases, the struggle against (neo)colonial corporate control), I sought ‘Ōiwi perspectives to understand how they measure that influence from the inside. While Hawaiian movements for sovereignty and justice have certainly gained wisdom and momentum from dozens of struggles all around the world, more scholarship is needed to track the influence of the Philippines and other sites on those movements. While empire would have colonized and racialized people forever casting their attention on the metropole, this project directs our attention on each other. I argue that seeing the Philippines “through Hawaiian eyes” helps with two important tasks: one, it interrupts the vacuum of information on the Philippines in Hawai‘i by centralizing decolonized voices; and two, it may help to forge greater Filipin@ commitment to Hawaiian independence by deepening the conversation on how our sovereignties are woven together. Additionally, such information is particularly important for long-term Filipin@ settlers who desire an independent Hawai‘i but aren’t sure how to articulate the complex continuities and discontinuities between our sovereignties, particularly given the failures of the Philippine state to deliver genuine, postcolonial independence.

Sovereignties in Conversation

The U.S. annexed the Philippines and Hawai‘i in 1898 with the intent of extinguishing political sovereignty at both sites. While the Philippines and Hawai‘i share this common trauma, the histories that followed are distinct in important ways. Similarly the term “sovereignty” takes on different contemporary meanings in the postcolony of the Philippines and the settler colony of Hawai‘i. In designing and delivering my research questions, I left the terms “Philippine sovereignty” and “Hawaiian sovereignty” undefined, thus allowing participants to make

connections as they saw fit. In this section, I review how the terms are often used, how they differ, and how these definitions derive from the historical specificity of each nation.

Philippine sovereignty as a form of national sovereignty must be traced to the anti-colonial movement that began with Katipunan revolution in 1896. Two years later, having triumphed over 350 years of Spanish colonial rule, Filipin@s were eager to begin the process of self-determination, only to face yet another imperial aggressor with a “civilizing” mission. The U.S. purchased the archipelago from Spain in the Treaty of Paris at the close of the Spanish American war, and was ready to go to war with the Filipin@s to pacify its “possession.” While the number of dead from the Philippine American war (1899-1913) is uncertain (estimates range from 200,000 to two million on the Filipin@ side, approximately 4,200 on the American), one thing is certain: genocidal war inaugurated the Filipin@s’ colonial relationship with the United States, which would last officially until the U.S. “granted” the Philippines its independence in 1946 (Rodriguez 120, Plante).³ The end of the American colonial period brought exciting changes: a national leader, a constitution, and international recognition for its sovereign borders. Decisions for Filipin@s would be made at Malacañang Palace, not the White House. At the same time the “postcolonial” nation-state that emerged afterward World War II was hardly independent of U.S. influence. As Schirmer and Shalom have argued, this was “independence with strings” (87). Corporate control (“free trade”) continued through the Bell Trade Act, U.S. military control continued through the Military Bases Agreement and its 99-year lease, and political and economic control continued through the collaboration of bourgeois, patriarchal elites, the most famous of whom was the dictator Ferdinand Marcos (1972-1986). In this way, Philippine sovereignty is typically defined as the potential of the national government to protect

its citizens, land, and waters against the dictates of the U.S. and other empires, both state and corporate.

The authority of the national government, however, is not always recognized by Indigenous people, Muslims, the poor, and other groups marginalized by – or even at war with – the state. One of my participants remarked on how surprised she was to meet an Igorot person who did not identify as a Filipin@ at all. This is not uncommon for Igorot and other Indigenous people in the self-governing northern Cordilleras region. The same can be said for Muslims in large southern island of Mindanao, where the Philippine American war extended for ten years after Aguinaldo's surrender, and where the Bangsamoro Movement and Moro Islamic Liberation Front have been advocating with for political autonomy since the early 1980s, or the New People's Army (the armed wing of the Communist Party) that has been at war with the state since the late 1960s. Thus Philippine national sovereignty is often linked to a Manila-centric nationalism / nation-statism, which carries with it both the anti-colonial potential and the neo-colonial limitations of that form of governance.

Unlike the Philippine archipelago that was named and united by Spanish colonists, Hawai'i was named and united by Hawaiians. What's also not commonly known is the kingdom was an internationally recognized nation-state by 1842-3, and over the 50 years of the kingdom a multicultural citizenry would grow including Hawaiians, Chinese, Japanese, Filipin@s, Blacks, whites and others.⁴ While Kānaka Maoli comprised the majority of the population at the beginning of the 19th century, Western diseases would lead to population collapse, made worse after the overthrow in 1893 and eventually U.S. annexation in 1898. Hawai'i is different from the Philippines in two key respects, the first being that it has been occupied for a far shorter amount of time and has not experienced imperialist war in the same way. While the Japanese did bomb

Pearl Harbor, this was a military target so the majority of casualties were military personnel. In contrast, the Philippines has fought wars with Spain, the U.S. and Japan and endured widespread civilian casualties and destruction to its infrastructure. Perhaps because of this history, Filipin@s have a profound understanding of what it means to take up arms against an imperialist, occupying army. Lili‘uokalani surely anticipated a similar catastrophe for the Hawaiian kingdom when she wrote to President McKinley in 1897: “I yielded my authority to the forces of the United States in order to avoid bloodshed, and because I recognized the futility of a conflict with so formidable a power.” Filipin@s also know of the violence of the postcolonial state inflicts onto its own citizenry (with President Duterte being the just the most recent example). To my knowledge, the Hawaiian nation state had no such equivalents in the 19th century.

Hawaiian activist / protectors as I will show in this paper articulate sovereignty in ways that sometimes align with a vision of an independent state that is multicultural (just as the Hawaiian kingdom was), and other times refer to Indigenous self-determination of Kānaka Maoli, and often to both. They do not speak about armed struggle. Perhaps most importantly, my project engages with the emerging commitment to *non-statist articulations of sovereignty*, in particular the very thought-provoking Hawaiian concept of “ea,” which illustrates the multilayered meanings of life, land, breath, and political independence, all as an ongoing practice. This is a distinction that has become evident in both academic and activist circles. Some Hawaiian activist-scholars (Haunani-Kay Trask, Noenoe Silva, Jon Osorio), have highlighted the many aspects of U.S. colonization in Hawai‘i and enumerated the crimes of missionaries, government advisors, and haole business interests that eventually led to the overthrow. More recently scholars have argued *occupation*, not colonization, is the most accurate framework for describing Hawai‘i’s unique status in which a foreign nation conquered a standing, internationally

recognized nation-state (Kanalū Young, Keanu Sai, Kūhiō Vogeler). Then there are those who seek to reconcile these viewpoints by noting Hawai‘i’s problems stem from a combination of the two. Americanization has meant the occupation of land as well as colonial control over multiple aspects of society (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, Hokulani Aikau). Indeed it’s the question of the relevance of the state in both academic and activist circles that is demanding increasing attention. De-occupation activists aim to limit or oppose state institutions like the government, militaries and police while nonstatist forms direct attention to strengthening the capacity of people to build healthy communities that decenter the state, or render the state redundant.

Portraiture

Although my commitment to the project was motivated by an ethic of solidarity, inevitably there are complications of a non-Hawaiian researcher interviewing ‘Ōiwi subjects. As Linda Tuhiwai-Smith and other scholars have pointed out, Indigenous people often experience university research as another apparatus of colonial theft, no matter how well-intentioned. It was and is important for me to try to reduce such harms. In that vein, I made sure each participant had the opportunity to edit each transcript to maximize their sense of control over their stories. Rather than organize the chapter thematically and risk taking participants words out of context, I focused on each person’s perspective one at a time. I included all names to emphasize each participant’s ownership of their words, lives, and theoretical contributions. My activist research methodology has been deeply influenced by the Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua’s use of “portraiture” in *The Seeds We Planted: Portraits of a Native Hawaiian Charter School* and *A Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land, and Sovereignty*.⁵ Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua

employed portraiture because of the strengths-based approach with interview subjects and the emphasis on intimate details to capture a more empowering, *holistic* portrait of the person. Similarly, I included many details about each person's genealogy, how they came to be involved in Hawaiian sovereignty movement(s), and the stories of their time in the Philippines. I was keen to capture the visions of solidarity that are so empowering to learn about, while also listening carefully for the *productive tensions* that remain in settler colonial contexts where Indigenous people remain minoritized on their own land. I scheduled each interview in the participants' homes or workplaces, so they could feel most at ease and tell those stories that might yield uncomfortable truths. In short, it was important for me also to think through the challenge posed by settler colonial analytics, while making sure to prioritize and honor Indigenous knowledge, particularly activist knowledge, here in Hawai'i.⁶

Because my ultimate goal is to encourage more Filipin@s to see the merit in these efforts for Hawaiian sovereignty and to lend their support, I begin each portrait noting the specific stories each person told that strengthened the notion of our shared solidarity and the pleasure this provides for settlers of color like me who are eager to feel a sense of affiliation and connection. Then I turn my attention to the *productive tensions*: that is, what are those realizations that are not easy to hear, what remains messy or unresolved within a settler colonial context. Rather than a framework of "settler time" that imagines Indigenous people within the past and eagerly awaits the day differences can be flattened in favor of a "democratic unity" that privileges settler majorities, I argue we must stay committed to addressing these tensions, however unsolvable, in order to refuse settler futurity.⁷ While I cannot offer easy answers, I believe that when we examine those tensions honestly we lay the foundation for stronger, more robust movements that can minimize the harm done by settler colonialism and the hegemonic practices that seek to

normalize it. I conclude the chapter with some suggestions on how these tensions might be overcome or productively engaged by activists, academics, and other people who strive for more complete visions of justice in Hawai‘i and other settler colonies with significant populations of people of color.

Aunty Terri Keko‘olani: Thinking Beyond Borders

Aunty Terri Keko‘olani is a long-time independence activist whose interview demonstrates what I mean by the pleasure of solidarity. Her activism began in the 1970s when she began her work with several organizations including Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (she was at the fifth landing when activists occupied the island to stop the Navy’s bombing), Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP), and the movement to establish Ethnic Studies at UH Mānoa. As a teenager, she spoke at a rally and was immortalized by photographer Ed Greevy; that photo has since become a mural in Makawao on Maui and has been an iconic representation of Kanaka Maoli women’s leadership in the sovereignty movement. In 2013, she won a lifetime achievement award at Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea, an event held in July or August each year to commemorate the restoration of Hawaiian sovereignty in 1843.⁸ Many of us in Decolonial Pin@ys, myself included, consider her our most important mentor.

I began the interviews with earnest curiosity to learn about Aunty Terri’s activist history, particularly in the sovereignty movement, and how her trips to the Philippines had influenced her work in Hawai‘i. However, before we could get into the “business side” of our meeting, Aunty Terri very generously took the time to help me understand her genealogy. More specifically, she insisted I learn about her own family connections to Filipin@ culture. She brought her family album to the interview and talked story about her grandmother’s second husband, a Filipino man

she lovingly called Popo, and all the fond memories she carries about him and her five Filipin@-Hawaiian cousins. In this way, Aunty Terri was the first interviewee to affirm that the seeds of shared struggle between Hawaiians and Filipin@s were planted in her mind long before she had the opportunity to go to the Philippines. In this way, she helped me expand my methodology; we need not think that Hawaiian sovereignty activists must go all the way across the Pacific to access the lessons of Filipin@ sovereignty when hundreds of thousands of Filipin@s are living right here in Hawai‘i now. Her beginning this way made me realize how we need not privilege those Filipin@s in the Philippines as the most authentic voice, as if diasporic Filipin@s have no connection to those topics.

In terms of activist genealogy, Aunty Terri studied Marxism/Leninism in the late 1970s during the Hawaiian renaissance, and this internationalist perspective still guides her thinking on social justice today. She credits the late Marion Kelly, a Cook Islander activist-scholar who was one of the founders of University of Hawai‘i’s Ethnic Studies program, as her key mentor. As Aunty Terri describes her own commitment to movement work, she always emphasizes the moments of shared struggle. She strategizes on how movements can better unite across borders and other lines of difference against our common enemies. In many of her stories, she identifies two groups of people who are committed to justice and facilitates their coming together to learn about each other’s issues. She has a breathtaking ability to articulate the liberation of Indigenous people and the working class with equal passion.

Aunty Terri tells a particularly touching story of solidarity from the late 1970s. The Del Monte pineapple workers in Kunia (“pensionados”) were organizing against threats to their pensions at the same time Waiāhole-Waikāne farmers were organizing to stop their landlord from selling the agricultural land to a housing developer. At the high point of the movement in

1976-77, a coalition of 500 tenants, farmers, students and other supporters locked arms on Kamehameha Highway in protest. Aunty Terri remembers that the Filipin@ pensionados and cannery workers joined the farmers when there was a call to action. They were mostly male workers who had risen to leadership in the labor movement, but they saw also understood the need to stand in solidarity with the kalo farmers who were protecting their land. Aunty Terri explains:

Workers needed to understand issues of farmers who are not agricultural workers, but are actually farmers. They are both from the earth, but one is agribusiness, and the other one is actually a different kind of business, a different relationship with land. My point is we saw politically the importance of bringing the two together.⁹

Waiāhole-Waikāne is often memorialized as a critical turning point for people's movements in Hawai'i. Movements for Hawaiian sovereignty, water rights, protecting agricultural land, and /or decent housing all owe a debt to this iconic moment. Students and communists are the groups most often credited with supporting the farmers. Here Aunty Terri remembers one part of the history that has not often been told: Filipin@ immigrants, even the ones working for corporations that were depriving kalo farmers of water, were allies too. In the end, the neighborhood was saved, largely due to this multiracial coalition forged by people like Aunty Terri.¹⁰

Aunty Terri's commitment to farm workers began when she was in high school. Even though she grew up middle class, she felt eager to understand class struggle, and got a job as a pineapple worker. As the only non-Filipina and non-immigrant on site she definitely felt like "the oddball," but eventually the workers could see she was serious: "My purpose was actually political: to understand the life of the working person in the pineapple field." Although she did this work many decades ago, she recalls a stunning amount of detail, from the uniform she had to

wear, the protective gear on her head, and of course the realization of how demanding such work is on one's body:

That work is hard! (Laughs.) You have to pick the pineapple, push off the top, and then you throw it into the machine, and that's what you're doing. You get a rhythm (demonstrates the motion by repeatedly throwing over her shoulder and twisting her head and body) ... You'd have to strip the plant so you're constantly dodging spiny things coming into your face. You're getting poked. It's hot. It was really something to be in that working condition. I learned a lot very quickly about life of people like that, agricultural workers.

Aunty Terri was particularly outraged when the workers had a dangerous accident which exposure them to pesticides. When the boss refused to allow them to take a pregnant worker to the hospital, Aunty Terri knew she had to act. They stopped working until eventually the boss relented so the pregnant worker could get medical care. She laughs recounting the moment of triumph when the Filipina workers no longer saw her as an outsider: "I learned how to break a machine! But that kind of camaraderie of helping each other made us closer."

Aunty Terri continues to put women's organizing at the center of her politics. In fact, it was the international women's demilitarization movement that brought Aunty Terri to the Philippines in 2009 and again in 2013. The International Women's Network Against Militarism (IWNAM) brings women together from Hawai'i, Guåhan, Okinawa, Korea, the Philippines, Puerto Rico and the continental U.S. to share strategies and build solidarity. A key lesson that Keko'olani brought back from those trips was the importance of women's organizing in promoting "genuine security." Aunty Terri speaks with deep admiration for the Filipina activists whose organizing skills made these international gatherings so successful. She was taken on

exposure trips to understand the needs of the Amerasian children left orphaned by U.S. military personnel; “the Malaya Lolas,” the World War II survivors of the Japanese sexual slavery (euphemistically known as “comfort women”); and the multiple effects of environmental contamination around the bases – poisoned water, cancers, and birth defects. The horrors of these abuses strengthened her resolve to fight against militarism’s most vicious, gendered effects both in times of war and militarized “peace.” IWNAM helps women work across national borders to bear witness to women’s stories and strategize for change on the international level.

While she is still a dedicated leader of the sovereignty movement, at the end of the three-part interview, Auntie Terri explained how she sees Hawaiian, Filipin@ and all sovereignties as interconnected:

The demilitarization movement makes you think beyond borders. It makes you think about the world as your community. I don’t want to diminish Indigenous thinking because that is reclaiming your relationship to your environment, to your land. That is important. But once you understand that that is replicated in many places throughout the world, then it begins to make sense. You have to have a global view to understand who you are as well.

Auntie Terri’s vision for Hawai‘i’s demilitarization is not limited by a provincial, “Not in my backyard” attitude toward Hawai‘i’s multiple bases.¹¹ Although this would be a worthwhile goal, she regularly campaigns for demilitarization and liberation for oppressed people all around the world. While my interview focused on her alliance with Filipin@s, she referred to how she was also influenced by struggles in Tahiti, Puerto Rico, Okinawa, Korea, Guåhan, West Papua, Palestine, Peru as well as the movements for Native American and Black liberation on the U.S. continent. Even more, when asked how she supports Hawaiian sovereignty movement today, she

points to her work with IWNAM. Aunty Terri is clear that everyone's sovereignties are interconnected.

It is extraordinary to witness Aunty Terri's deep commitment to building alliances with both Filipin@ immigrant workers in Hawai'i and with demilitarization activists in the Philippines. In Hawai'i today, there are many struggles where it is easy to see Filipin@s and Hawaiians not working on the same issue, particularly with regard to water. For example, in East Maui today there are taro farmers (mostly Hawaiian) have made real gains to restore traditional stream flows that had been diverted by corporate agribusinesses like Alexander and Baldwin on Maui. At the same time, immigrant laborers (mostly Filipin@) have been very visible organizing to protect agribusiness jobs that might be lost if this occurs.¹² Particularly in this case, it is far too easy to see taro farmers' rights and agricultural workers' rights in a zero-sum game; either the Hawaiian taro farmers can win or the Filipin@ immigrant workers can win, but never both. Aunty Terri points to a transformative politics in which workers and farmers can and must stand together in order for real justice to occur. This begins with bringing people together to provide education on what is at stake for both parties. While ultimately I believe justice means allowing streams to flow and kalo farmers to be protected, it is important to reach out to workers as potential allies. When we ask workers to reflect on their own connection to sacred places and ancestral food ways in the Philippines, they can better understand what kalo farmers aim to preserve and perpetuate. Decolonial Pin@ys has only partly begun that work on O'ahu through Aikea, the community outreach wing of Local 5, by educating hotel workers on the struggle to protect Mauna Kea from the proposed Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT)¹³, but much more remains to be done. Aunty Terri's optimism is needed more than ever to help us to build coalitions that will outsmart the divisions created and maintained by capitalism.

Today Auntie Terri remains deeply committed to encouraging Kānaka Maoli to express their solidarity with other oppressed groups. In October 2015, Decolonial Pin@ys began a campaign to raise awareness about the atrocities against a Lumad (Indigenous) community in southern Philippines.¹⁴ We attracted a good number of people from the community, mostly Filipin@s but other groups as well. When I asked Auntie Terri what she thought of the event, she shook her head saying, “We have to bring more Kānaka into the room next time.” She said this despite the fact that many Kānaka ‘Ōiwi were busy trying to stop the Na‘i Aupuni,¹⁵ the Thirty Meter Telescope on Mauna Kea, the Solar Telescope on Haleakalā¹⁶, and water theft in East Maui.¹⁷ In other words, the settler state had and has Kānaka Maoli and their allies battling several fronts at once. While these movements have proved resilient, I still question how much activist energy is left for building solidarity with immigrant workers too. Solidarity is extra work and that work takes energy. Solidarity is also unpaid work that is often gendered. Hawai‘i high cost of living makes these barriers particularly difficult. This is a productive tension that remains to be answered: how do we build the vision of interconnected sovereignty and intersectional justice when surviving in global capitalism means there’s little time to educate our communities on their own issues, never mind building coalitions?

Adam Keawe Manalo-Camp – Weaving our Histories Together

Adam Keawe Manalo-Camp was born in Papakōlea to a Filipin@-Hawaiian family with long commitments to social justice on both sides. His great, great grandfather, George Pilipo, was a Hawaiian kingdom legislator for 20 years and his son, Camp’s great grandfather, was jailed and tortured for participating in the Wilcox Rebellion of 1895 that sought to abrogate the Bayonet Constitution. Camp’s grandmother was at Queen Lili‘uokalani’s funeral, and it was this

grandmother who made sure Hawaiian was his first language. When he enrolled in school, he was put into SLEP (Secondary Level English Proficiency) classes. Because of this experience and his own Filipino heritage, he understands the pain of immigrants who lose their language through the American educational system. He has degrees in International Relations and Psychology from Chaminade and Hawai'i Pacific University. He was involved in Ka Lāhui, Nation of Hawai'i, and American Friends Service Committee before moving to Thailand to teach English. He is the only one of my interviewees who is fluent in Filipino languages (Tagalog and Visayan) as well as several other Asian and European languages. The interview took place over Skype because today he works for a non-governmental organization in Quezon City, Metro Manila.

The lessons Camp learned for the Hawaiian sovereignty movement have come not from going to the Philippines for a brief visit, but from living in the Philippines and other independent South East Asian countries for many years. He has been involved with Filipino “nation building projects” (i.e. development and infrastructure) as well as resettlement for Rohingya refugees and LGBT individuals seeking political asylum from high-risk countries. Importantly, he has also lived in Mindanao, the southernmost Filipino island that has its own long-standing movements for liberation and autonomy via the movements of Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Bangsamoro and New People's Army, the armed wing of the communist party. Camp also lived in Thailand through two coups. As a result of these experiences, Camp thinks seriously about how to combat poverty with sound economic development policy. Problems of corruption by elites persist in the “postcolony” of the Philippines, in the never technically colonized country of Thailand and perhaps – he fears – in a newly independent Hawai'i as well.

It became clear pretty quickly in the interview that Camp's vision of solidarity is forged through weaving Hawaiian and Filipin@ histories together. In fact, to call him a "history buff" is a serious understatement. Although Camp has lived abroad for over ten years, many people in Hawai'i are still in regular conversation with him because he runs a Facebook page on Hawaiian history and culture, onto which he posts several times a week. He is equally interested in Filipin@ history. As a Filipino-Hawaiian he enjoys making the historical connections between the two sites, particularly "finding the Hawai'i in the Philippines," such as lesser-known historical facts about Hawaiian involvement in American-occupied Philippines, both as agents and detractors of the occupation. He explained that there were Hawaiians who "moved here as a result of annexation and became rich. There's quite a few native Hawaiians who came to places like Baguio, there's even street names after these families."¹⁸ According to Camp, there was a Hawaiian who was a part of the pan-Malay movement in the 1920s that included Filipin@s, Malaysians, Indonesians, who were all fighting to throw off the yoke of the colonial powers in Southeast Asia and unite as one country. There were also Hawaiians who were involved with and trained with the New People's Army in the 70s and 80s. His knowledge base made him very sophisticated in his comparative analysis, perhaps more than almost anyone I've ever met inside or outside the university. After the interview, Camp sent me a three-page addendum on Filipin@-Hawaiian historical continuities and discontinuities, full of insight and connections that extended far beyond the typical "legacy of 1898" framework.

Camp's interview also yielded some other productive tensions with regard to settler colonialism, namely "Filipin@ colonial mentality," its roots and how it presents a real barrier to solidarity with the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. Although it pains him to admit it, he sees too many people in the Philippines who remember the U.S. colonial period with nostalgia

because of the number of development projects that occurred during that time. Again, he turns to history to understand the context of how this occurred. During World War II, many Filipin@s intellectuals who had resisted the Americans were killed by the Japanese Imperial Army: “When you eliminate a generation of intellectuals, a generation of people who resisted American occupation, and then you have an upcoming generation that grew up in poverty and corruption – they’re disillusioned with independence, so they tend to look at the American era [1898-1946] as a golden era.”¹⁹ In other words, the seeds of anti-colonial mentality may have born more fruit on Philippine society at large had it not been for World War II and its aftermath of militarized peace. In contrast with Aunty Terri who talked mostly with demilitarization activists and those harmed by militarization, Camp notes how inaccessible this critique is to the average Filipin@, who often believes the bases are the best economic engine they can hope for. He estimates that if polled, 70% of Filipin@s would vote to keep the U.S. bases.²⁰ From Camp’s point of view, a key lesson of Filipin@ sovereignty for Hawaiians to take to heart is neocolonialism continues on so-called sovereign land. In this way, as many post-colonies will attest, independence is an illusion. Even worse, in Camp’s view, the postcolonial Philippine state has generated *more* love for America. Those people who come to Hawai‘i bring their pro-Americanism, which makes it harder for the independence movement to build alliances. Camp also points to the Americanized school system that keeps the level of capitalist indoctrination strong: “Many Filipin@s don’t completely understand their own historical ‘experience.’ In addition, many Filipin@s in the Philippines look at development as being signs of prosperity and modernity. That’s basically the Asian Development Bank line that is taught in the school system. Skyscrapers and large buildings are viewed favorably.” This education, combined with Christianization, prejudice

many Filipin@s against seemingly “pagan” ‘āina-centered (land-centered) lifestyles that oppose big development like H-3²¹ and the Thirty Meter Telescope.

Camp seemed to understand immediately the complexity of my project in terms of both the pleasures of solidarity and the productive tensions. On the one hand, he reads history always attentive to the moments when Filipin@s and Hawaiians worked together for the same political goals. On the other hand, he lacks optimism for present and future solidarity. Perhaps because of his mixed heritage, Camp was relaxed and candid stating uncomfortable opinions about Filipin@ colonial mentality and the enormity of what Hawaiian sovereignty activists and their allies are up against in winning them over. While he didn’t state it so explicitly, his analysis left me asking: how can we get Filipin@s to believe in Hawaiian sovereignty when so many were never taught the importance of *Filipin@* sovereignty? Immigrants from (neo)colonized places might bring their decolonial knowledge to nourish and strengthen the independence movement, but more often their colonial education means they come to Hawai‘i already loving America, and believing in America’s right to whatever lands it has occupied. Elise Dela Cruz Talbert, a Hawaiian Filipina epidemiologist who I interviewed for this project, voiced similar concerns about Filipin@s who are anti-Hawaiian sovereignty: “More education needs to be done with immigrants – *if they are allies*.” It’s a chicken and egg problem. Why should sovereignty activists educate the unwilling? On the other hand, how can anyone learn anything unless given the opportunity?

Because of his historical knowledge and personal experience, Camp’s perspective is unique. His fluency in the elitism in both sites, his commitment to all oppressed people (“I think that Native Americans, Latinos, African Americans, Filipin@s, and other colonized and oppressed peoples should be our allies. Period.”) Like Aunty Terri, he is quick to mention the

way international movements nourish and need one another. In terms of movement style, Camp is inspired by the dedication of Filipin@ social justice activists who demonstrate the change they want to see in their daily practice: “The greatest thing I have learned in the Philippines in terms of the leftist organizations here is that you have to be a counter culture within your organization. You have to demonstrate how the nation will actually be run if you had the political power.” He has many compliments for Filipin@ youth organizations, which unlike in Hawai‘i are fully autonomous: “I think that there is much that Hawaiians could learn from the Filipin@ experience and the way that youth groups in the Philippines operate and organize.”²² In short, the Philippines is a place of vast contradictions. Even if the majority does have “colonial mentality,” as Camp asserts, the social justice activists who understand the scope of the problem have profound lessons to teach about really believing and working toward people’s liberation, no matter how insurmountable the work might seem.

Kīhei Nahale-a: Life, Land, Leadership

Kīhei Nahale-a is originally from Hilo, and on his Hawaiian father’s side, he descends from well-renowned musicians and educators. He also has a haole mother of Pennsylvania Dutch ancestry who came to Hawai‘i as a Peace Corps volunteer. Nahale-a went to Kamehameha Schools then later studied Hawaiian language at University of Hawai‘i at Hilo. When I asked him about his activism and involvement with the sovereignty movement, Nahale-a hesitated with the word a bit before responding: “I don’t know if ‘activist’ is the good way to describe Hawaiians that are fighting for their sovereignty.” Nahale-a’s discussion over terms is a useful reminder that Indigenous people do not always describe protection of their land and culture in the same terms a “rights-and-demands” framework of Western-style activism. This distinction

came up recently in the confrontations over the Thirty Meter Telescope because journalists often used the term “protestors” rather than their self-ascription “protectors.” The preferred term in Hawaiian is “ku kia‘i mauna” (guardians standing for the mountain).

Growing up, Nahale-a struggled with identity issues as a hapa-haole (half-white) person, and admitted he was not always interested in Hawaiian issues. His wake up call came in 1993 during the centennial events mourning the overthrow at ‘Iolani Palace. His Filipino-Hawaiian teacher (“the calmest guy in the world”) become visibly infuriated with protestors of the procession who shouted to Kānaka Maoli “GET OVER IT!” and “You’re American now!” He describes that weekend as “transformative” – awakening him to the vitality of the movement and the legitimacy of Hawaiian claims for sovereignty.²³

Nahale-a has taught at Hawai‘i Community College and through multiple community-based organizations. Today he is the Kupualau programs and curriculum director at Papahana Kuaola, a nonprofit organization that sits on 63 acres in Waipao, He‘eia on the Windward side of O‘ahu. They describe themselves as an “mālama ‘āina (care for the land) based learning organization that is connecting the area’s past with a sustainable future.” Owned by Kamehemeha Schools, the organization hosts numerous educational and political events teaching ‘āina-based (“that which feeds”/land-based) literacy for youth, adults and elders. It’s easy to understand why several sovereignty events and even weddings have taken place there. With the water flowing gently alongside the majestic Ko‘olau mountains, the ‘āina exudes a sense of peace and healing. Although the state still has jurisdiction over the land, from a Hawaiian sovereignty perspective, it feels like a liberated zone. In fact, Nahale-a explains that this work at Papahana Kuaola is how he engages with sovereignty today: “My activism now is different. It’s about creating safe spaces for people to develop, nurture and grow.”²⁴ While he went through an

“angry phase” now his guiding philosophy is that “Aloha is a greater energy than anger” so he dedicates himself to “transform things and people.”

When I began this project, I felt certain that I would find ways that Filipin@ knowledge had nourished the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, but I did not prepare myself for Nahale-a, my first participant, to declare during the scheduling of his interview: “Everything I do here at Papahana Kuaola has been informed by the lessons I learned in the Philippines. 100%.” When I asked him to confirm his powerful statement in person, Nahale-a did so with enthusiasm, telling story after story of all he learned and how grateful he was for knowledge that had impacted him both personally and professionally.

Nahale-a went to the Philippines with the Consuelo Foundation who sponsored 16 people from Hawai‘i for a 12-day leadership training in 2013. Consuelo is a Philippines-based philanthropy organization that funds hundreds of programs in the Philippines and Hawai‘i serving women, children and communities affected by abuse and neglect. On the trip, they met with several government and other community leaders and went on exposure trips to community development projects like land-restoration, food security, arts, women and youth empowerment. Many Kānaka Maoli were chosen for the trip including Puanani Burgess, Mehanaokala Hind, Kaipo Kukahiko as well as non-Hawaiian leaders. In many ways the thinking behind the Consuelo’s Project Leadership Training aligns with that of my own project; that is, the Philippines has a lot of lessons to offer but leaders in Hawai‘i need more opportunities to visit and see for themselves.

One of the key lessons Nahale-a learned in the Philippines was how in healing and transforming land, the people themselves are healed and transformed. Consuelo took the participants to anti-poverty programs that he knew immediately should be replicated in Hawai‘i

given that Papahana Kuaola works with people transitioning from addiction and incarceration. One of the most memorable programs was under the leadership of Fr. Marciano “Rocky” G. Evangelista, who works with disadvantaged or “throwaway” youth in the Tuloy sa Don Bosco School in Laguna (Burwell). This program had transformed what was essentially an abandoned lot into a compound teaching sustainable agriculture and aquaponics. This model was very thought provoking for Nahale-a who wanted to bring that same healing to people in need in Hawai‘i: “We prove every day that we can restore land to a space that sustains us. I’ve seen that in the Philippines. We can take one rubbish dump, out in the middle of nowhere, and create community. Really lovely, awesome communities.” The abundant kalo and healthy stream flows are evidence that this same vision is nourishing Hawaiian land and leadership today. Nahale-a also learned that it is fruitless to send newly rehabilitated people back to land that is still depleted. Quoting Evangelista, Nahale-a says: “For every child I rehabilitate, I will also grow a million leaves. So that they go into a space that has cleaner air, and more food, more hope.” Nahale-a spends a lot of the interview thinking about “leadership.” In a 90-minute interview, he uses the word eighteen times. For him, land, people and leadership must be working in close connection with each other. He explains, “You have to look at land as having a voice.” In other words, a person’s leadership skills should be measured by both the ability to heal people and heal land as they are inseparable.

As I mentioned before, I did not define “sovereignty” for my participants, either in terms of sovereignty in Philippines or in Hawai‘i. There are many efforts under the umbrella of “the” Hawaiian sovereignty movement, so each participant was free to explain their involvement from their own vantage point. Importantly, Nahale-a talks about sovereignty in deliberately *non-statist terms*. He does not mention involvement with efforts to remove the military bases like Aunty

Terri or to push for land reform like Camp. Nahale-a explains that he chooses to “live sovereign,” as kupuna (elder) Keli‘ikanaka‘ole “Skippy” Ioane advised him in that same momentous 1993 memorial he had gone to with his Hawaiian language teacher: “You *asking them* for sovereignty. I never ask them for shit. I sovereign already....So just live. Just build your hale (house). Make your own codes, make your own laws. Govern yourself.” For Nahale-a, this was another breakthrough moment that felt deeply empowering. Rather than working within the activist framework of demands from the settler state,²⁵ he focused on his own kuleana (responsibility) in building the lāhui (nation or people) through mālama ‘āina (taking care of the land).

Nahale-a was the first participant to use the word “ea,” a deeply significant Hawaiian concept. Like other Indigenous people, Kanaka ‘Ōiwi are eager to find terms in their ancestral languages to capture more meaningful and culturally grounded vision of a “sovereign nation.” Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua elaborates on the term’s multiply layered meanings in *Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land and Sovereignty*:

Ea refers to political independence and is often translated as “sovereignty.” It also carries the meaning of “life” and “breath,” among other things.

A shared characteristic in each of these translations is that ea is an active state of being. Like breathing, ea cannot be achieved or possessed; it requires constant action day after day, generation after generation. Unlike Euro-American philosophical notions of sovereignty, ea is based on the experiences of people on the land, relationships forged through the process of remembering and caring for wahi pana, storied places...Indeed, ea is a word that describes emergence, such as volcanic islands from the depths of the ocean (3-4).

Goodyear-Ka'ōpua told me that she wanted the title of the book to include the word “ea” but her publisher discouraged her from doing so. Because internet search engines privilege the English language, this Hawaiian word and the book itself would get lost. Similarly, this Hawaiian concept was getting lost in my vision of “Hawaiian sovereignty” that was rooted in statist, Euro-American expectations of what that looks like. Admittedly, I remain captivated by those visions of Hawaiian sovereignty that demand specific material transformations like removal of military bases, control of tax revenue, and a seat at the United Nations. But as Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, Hokulani K. Aikau, Jon Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio, and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui and others have pointed out, these legal/ political efforts to achieve these goals are expensive, draining and do not always result in meaningful results for ordinary people.²⁶ They also put people in a position of waiting for an independence of the future, rather than enacting sovereign practices of Indigenous governance today. Ea is a *practice* that Nahale-a and others like him are engaged in now by restoring land and healing people. While not as familiar as statist versions of sovereignty, it has become a powerful way to remember that any political visioning for the islands must be guided by Indigenous Hawaiian values, and grounded in protection, care and love for 'āina.

Puni Jackson – “Giving Mana Where We're Supposed To Be Giving Mana.”

Puni Jackson grew up in a Filipin@-Hawaiian family in Pu'unui on O'ahu and has been involved in Hawaiian activist movements since the age of thirteen. She went to Kamehameha Schools, where she graduated in 1993, the same year as the centennial of the overthrow. She credits her grandparents with instilling strong Hawaiian values in her, values that she brings to her job today as the Ho'oulu 'Āina Program Coordinator where she manages perhaps the most verdant and peaceful place in Kalihi Valley. Their parent organization, Kōkua Kalihi Valley

Comprehensive Family Service, runs a community clinic and café where they educate Kalihi residents (many of them Filipin@s, Micronesians, Sāmoans and Hawaiians) on dietary issues, among dozens of other health education projects. Similar to Papahana Kuaola, this organization hosts thousands of students and volunteers each year in land-based literacy projects like protecting native forest, restoring stream flow, and growing sustainable crops. Jackson was trained as an artist, which she explains is not uncommon among other mālama ‘āina activists. Two of her three degrees are in painting, training that has proved useful for her present duties. She explains the land they are restoring is like a “100-acre canvas.”²⁷ Although technically the land is leased by State Department of Land and Natural Resources, it’s easy to see this ‘āina also as a liberated zone, or a space where it’s easy to forget that Hawai‘i is under U.S. colonial occupation. At the entrance to the property is a sign that reads: “This land is your grandmother, and she loves you.” It’s this constant reminder of love and connection that permeates throughout Ho‘oulu ‘Āina and through Jackson in particular.

It is difficult to isolate one way that Jackson’s words speak to the concept of solidarity because one could argue all of her work is imbued with this value. It is more accurate to say her guiding philosophy is a sincere sense of aloha for everyone, a radically inclusive framework which makes “the politics of solidarity” seem somewhat strident and formal. She is uncomfortable with any version of activism that is too identity-based or essentialist in its articulation, in her words, when the “aloha part is missing.” Jackson sees her job as fostering openness between people of all backgrounds, which starts with helping them connect to their own ancestors and to the land:

Ho‘oulu ‘Āina is where I live and work right now. I think that we are doing a good job of having a welcoming space, an inviting space for people to connect to

their own ancestry and in that way that is empowering, and looking at the sense of responsibility for where they are standing, sleeping, shitting and drinking. It's a kind, welcoming and loving way to do it. That's what my grandparents were like. It's a role she admits would have been difficult for her "younger, angrier self," (she laughs remembering her paintings of hula dancers with machine guns), but she speaks with deep certainty that the work she does now is the best use of her political energies. Like Nahale-a, hers is not the activism that seeks to abolish anything; rather she aims to build the mana (power) that comes from caring for land (mālama 'āina), informed by knowledge of the ancestors ('ike kupuna), and expanding leadership opportunities for young people.

Like Auntie Terri, Jackson felt the seeds of Filipin@-Hawaiian solidarity were forged right within her family. Her mother was born in Cebu, but Jackson had never been to the Philippines until she went on the same 2013 Consuelo leadership training with Nahale-a. During the trip she had countless realizations about the intimate details of Filipin@ culture she had been exposed to all along, without having the proper words for it. For instance, she delighted in recognizing for the first time the distinction between *kapwa* (Tagalog for "togetherness") and *kākou* (Hawaiian for "inclusiveness"). Small revelations of watching how Filipin@s kiss babies with a deep inhale on the cheek, for example, "helped me understand all these other kinds of aloha that are part of who I am."²⁸ While she learned valuable lessons about economic development ("We must always build the labor costs *up!*" that is, rather than letting the bottom line decide priorities, find creative ways to put workers'/peoples' needs for a decent living/life at the center), the most profound insights for Jackson came from observations of everyday life that enlarged her sense of what constitutes *real embodied sovereignty*. She told many stories of her amazement at the way ordinary people lived in their bodies with such confidence in their

capabilities as well as a deep sense of their connectedness and responsibility to each other.

Everything from the way people share space or navigate traffic perched on the roof of a bus provided powerful metaphors to Jackson on how to be more open-minded about what is *politically possible* in Hawai‘i: “Our minds are so dulled by our experience in this context!”

Where the assumption might be that economic oppression would limit people’s imaginations, the Philippines proved to Jackson that sometimes the opposite is true. Filipin@s proved to her that poverty can make people *more* resourceful and imaginative: “They navigate the world with an extremely broad sense of what is possible.” While Jackson was careful to point out that there was clearly a lot of pain from that poverty, what remains with her is how Filipin@s carried mana (spiritual power) in a way that truly sparked her imagination.

In terms of productive tensions, once again I ran into a problem with my own limited understanding of what “Hawaiian sovereignty” means. For example, Auntie Terri identifies as a demilitarization activist so her answers included discussion of military bases, and the gendered ways governments and militaries oppress and colonize. Similarly, Camp works on refugee resettlement, so his answers included stories of negotiating with government bureaucracies in order to permit mobility across borders. In contrast, both Nahale-a and Jackson emphasized non-statist versions of sovereignty. I didn’t say it out loud, but Jackson may have sensed my discomfort with this “softer” version of sovereignty. Isn’t it most important to keep focused on the material goal of U.S. withdrawal? Jackson explained:

I don’t care a lot about the state. I don’t feel oppressed because I send the state an invoice for the youth program...If we can come to one another and to the knowledge of our ancestors on this land and all lands, with that sense of

abundance, with *abundant-mindedness*, then we are able to *ho 'o mana, grow*
mana, ho 'oulu mana, that mana grows...

As she made this last comment circling her forearms like waves cascading towards me, which further emphasized the “abundant mindedness” that shapes her thinking. She went further to clarify: “When you’re talking about *political* sovereignty, I’m talking more about *life* sovereignty. And I think if more people lived the life sovereignty of very expansive, broad thinking, do-whatever- the-fuck-it-takes, then in our political sovereignty we would *give mana where we’re supposed to be giving mana*.” In doing so, they experience their own sovereign control despite the larger political reality designed to rob them of that. So when Jackson said, “I am feeling pretty sovereign!” I had to learn that she was referencing another kind of sovereignty that no state effort could grant or take away.

The role of the state in terms of movement priorities is a topic being addressed by multiple Indigenous scholars in and outside of Hawai‘i. In *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, Glen Coulthard argues that the process of gaining recognition through the state (i.e. through “land claim settlements, economic development initiatives, and self-government agreements” inevitably results in native peoples becoming included in, and thus assimilating to, settler culture (3). Drawing on Fanon, Coulthard argues the liberal politics of recognition “discursively shape, regulate and govern how many of us have come to think about Indigenous identity and community belonging” (103). In short, Indigenous people need to indigenize decolonization efforts or risk becoming unrecognizable to themselves. He calls for a resurgence of activism that affirms real self-determination. What’s needed is a “critical individual and collective self-recognition on the part of Indigenous societies” (48). In an interview for *Decolonization, Education and Society*, Coulthard and Leanne Simpson explain the

centrality of “Indigenous land-based education” to a this “embodied resurgence.”²⁹ Similarly Jackson saw a kind of embodied mana in the Philippines that informed her vision of a sovereign Hawai‘i, or ea, but just like with Nahale-a, this was not the kind of lesson of Filipin@ sovereignty I was expecting.

While Jackson was extremely plainspoken – even more so than Nahale-a – about her commitment to non-statist forms of sovereignty, it should be noted that she had deep respect for those who engage with the state as well. To illustrate, she referred to a concept she heard in the Philippines: “the bibingka effect.” Bibingka is a rice dessert made in a clay pot. Cooking it requires heat from both the top and the bottom “in order for it to be ‘ono” (delicious). Similarly, those who work at the grassroots must coordinate with those who negotiate or agitate with the settler state in order for total decolonization to occur. While Jackson felt it was no longer her role to stand on the street with a sign demanding change, she explained that when she did attend those rallies she came with ‘awa (traditional narcotic drink) and ‘ōlena (turmeric root) and other ‘āina-based gifts to promote healing, wellness and mana. In other words, people working for Hawaiian sovereignty movement(s) are diverse in their approaches and their opinions. Aunty Terri , Camp, Nahale-a and Jackson all have different roles to play, but the change they make from their respective positions allows for ea / sovereignty to grow.

Sovereignty, Ea and Spaces of Mutual Recognition

With this project, I began with a question about how the struggle for Filipin@ sovereignty has informed the struggle for Hawaiian sovereignty. As these four interviews have demonstrated, sovereignty is not a single thing for either location. Traditionally, sovereignty has meant a people’s territorial right to noninterference from foreign occupation. For Aunty Terri ,

demilitarization and anti-imperialism are hugely important tactics of the movement because the U.S. military bases violate Hawaiian sovereignty, as well as the sovereignties of 800+ locations throughout the world. For Aunty Terri, more attention must be paid to women and girls who suffer the most yet are often ignored. Camp emphasizes that sovereignty must include protection from local elites who collaborate with multinational corporations, choosing short-term profit or personal gain over long-term sustainability and people-centered development. More attention must be paid to ending poverty and providing proper resistance education, particularly anticolonial histories that help people see their connections across borders. For both Aunty Terri and Camp, demilitarization and anti-imperialism are useful frameworks for understanding how global forms of power thwart efforts for national or local control. In contrast, Nahale-a and Jackson focus their sovereignty efforts, or more precisely *ea*, by engaging with people to *mālama ʻāina*. In their view, too much focus on the settler state drains people of *mana*. More attention must be paid to helping people feel sovereign control over themselves and their *ʻāina*, a task that does not require trips to courthouses or the United Nations. As people forge connection with *ʻāina*, both are healed and fed. For Nahale-a, more attention must be paid to those on the margins of the settler state, especially those rehabilitating from drugs and transitioning from prison. For Jackson, more attention must be paid to young people; they must build their leadership with a solid connection to ancestors and *ʻāina*. While each of the four has different points of emphasis, I feel certain that all of them would agree that none of these efforts is in vain.

In addition to the distinction between territorial sovereignty and *ea*, the interviews reminded me Hawaiian sovereignty is an umbrella term in second sense. These Kanaka Maoli movements are an avenue for Indigenous resurgence to regain their traditional relationships with land, water, language and culture that have been disrupted through colonial trauma. It is also a

way for all people in Hawai‘i to build a sustainable future independent of the U.S. and other empires. All four participants spoke of their time in the Philippines as nourishing of and expanding their commitment to Hawaiian sovereignty, while also making them reflect differently on Filipin@s in Hawai‘i.

The interviews provide a reminder about the importance of solidarity, because it is vitally important way to keep our movements nourished and sustainable. The participants also provide living examples of how to build an independence movement that is inclusive, and that connects sovereignties for a more complete vision of justice. The interviews also provide a reminder that as settlers we must listen for productive tensions as they often provide the clue for where Indigenous people need strong allies with the courage to speak uncomfortable truths and work toward lasting solutions. My hope is that Filipin@s eager to participate in the Hawaiian sovereignty movement will read this chapter and have new tools to guide them to do so in a pono (just, proper, balanced) way.

As state recognition becomes synonymous with a kind of assimilationist or respectability politics, more Indigenous scholars have begun theorizing other kinds of recognition that do not involve the state. Kēhaulani Vaughn’s research explores the recent treaty agreements between Hawaiians in California and the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians, an Indigenous people who like Kānaka Maoli, are not federally recognized.³⁰ This trans-Indigenous form of collaboration gave new hope to both groups, providing validation that each is a nation forging relationships with other nations. Their chief was moved to say, “People don’t have to be settlers, they can be guests, and Hawaiians are guests.” I don’t mean to suggest that that Filipin@s in Hawai‘i can undo their settler status; rather I mean to highlight how Kānaka Maoli had found a way to show genuine solidarity in Indian country in a way that actually empowered the Juaneno’s sovereign

sense of themselves. Vaughn's research points out that Hawaiians on the U.S. continent must negotiate their own positionality in that settler colonial context just as Filipin@s in Hawai'i must negotiate their own positionality in this settler colonial context, a difficult task that must begin, Indigenous scholars point out, by recognizing whose ancestral land is under occupation.

This research provided a reminder for how much aloha Kānaka Maoli have for Filipin@s as cultural kin who have been stereotyped and ridiculed. At the recent Native American Indigenous Studies (NAISA) Conference held in Honolulu, several prominent Kānaka Maoli scholars including Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, Kaleikoa Kaeo, Kealani Cook and Iokepa Salazar attended a roundtable led by Decolonial Pin@ys and shared their thoughts on bridging Filipin@-Hawaiian connections in the classroom and the community. They spoke about their frustration at the Department of Education's non-inclusion of culturally relevant materials for Filipin@s and Hawaiians, and the heartbreak in confronting, for example, their Filipin@ college students' ignorance of the Philippine-American war had even occurred. For a moment, my fellow panelists and I marveled at what had transpired. We organized the panel to discuss the "Politics of Solidarity" as Filipina allies of a free and independent Hawai'i. What was created was a space of *mutual* recognition. While we in Decolonial Pin@ys cannot call Hawai'i our ancestral homeland, many of us have ancestors buried here, and we aim to keep using our gifts to fight against militarization, and colonial occupation, while opening up spaces of healing and creative liberation. Our people may not always ally with Hawaiian causes for land, life and sovereignty in the ways I wish, but we left the NAISA conference more confident that great potential remains for the future.

Conclusion

I want to express my gratitude to these extraordinary people who gave their time so generously for this project. They shared much more in each interview than I could include here.³¹ Their perspectives point to how important international perspectives – in this case, the Philippines – are and have been to nationalist struggles – in this case, Hawai‘i. Their perspectives also serve as a reminder to progressive Filipin@s here in Hawai‘i that we are not just settlers taking up resources, but decolonial allies with valuable mana‘o (wisdom) to share. They help us better understand the intellectual abundance available in the contemporary definitions of sovereignty and the continuing possibilities for ea to be strengthened in unexpected ways. I hope their words encourage Filipin@s in Hawai‘i, and other people of color in settler colonies, to interrogate our own relationship to indigeneity, not to appropriate but to deepen our understanding and commitment to Indigenous survival and self-determination both here and in our ancestral homes. I hope more Kanaka Mali activists come to learn about the Philippines, not just the farce of our “postcolonial” nonindependence, but the beauty of the land, the knowledge of the people(s), and our powerful activist traditions too. As fellow Decolonial Pin@y and poet Darlene Rodrigues reminds us, long before there was an Arab Spring, Filipin@s toppled a dictator; we know a thing or two about having big goals that other people might consider idealistic. Having and sharing this knowledge is crucial to helping Filipin@s in Hawai‘i to understand our own value as well as our kuleana within the independence movement today. I hope these reflections can open more dialogue about genuine sovereignty and how we can maximize ea on all our homelands.

Notes

¹ There are several texts examining the role of administration of the U.S. 1898 (neo)colonies past and present: See Lanny Thompson's *Imperial Archipelagoes: Representation and Rule in the Insular Territories under U.S. Dominion after 1898*; Joanna Poblete's *Islanders in the Empire: Filipino and Puerto Rican Laborers in Hawai'i*; Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez's *Securing Paradise: Tourism and Militarism in Hawai'i and the Philippines*.

² According to the 2010 U.S. census, Filipin@s are the second largest ethnic group in Hawai'i. 197,497 identify as only Filipin@, or 15% of the total population; 342,095 identify as part-Filipin@, or 25% of the total population. 47,951 identify as only Hawaiian, or 6% of the total population and 182,120 as part-Hawaiian or 21% of the total population ("Table 6").

³ Emilio Aguinaldo was captured in 1902, marking the end of the war on Luzon. However, warfare continued on Mindanao until 1913. See Samuel K. Tan's *The Filipino-American War, 1899-1913*. For an extended discussion on why "genocide" is the most appropriate term, see Dylan Rodriguez's *Suspended Apocalypse: White Supremacy, Genocide, and the Filipino Condition*.

⁴ In 1842, the U.S. formally recognized the Hawaiian kingdom, the British and French governments followed in 1843. See Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. www.unpo.org/content/view/full/1548/236/

⁵ In *The Art and Science of Portraiture*, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Hoffman Davis explain how portraiture is an explicitly activist method for working with interview subjects. As the title suggests, their method combines the precision of the social scientist with the aesthetic skill of the artist. Lawrence-Lightfoot writes: "We engage in acts (implicit and explicit) for social transformation, we create opportunities for dialogue, we pursue the silences, and in the process, we feel ethical dilemmas and a great moral responsibility" (11). Because my interest is in creating solidarity and dialogue between Hawaiians and Filipin@s in Hawai'i, this activist methodology has proved very useful. In contrast with the positivist social scientist method that often seeks to recreate the conditions of the laboratory (in other words, to divorce subjects from their contexts so that measurable outcomes can be verified elsewhere), the "portraiture" seeks to portray subjects situated within their contexts to illuminate the specific systems of power they aim to dismantle. Working with portraiture gave me permission to admit that this academic research project demands a level of creative artistry. Portraiture provided me the confidence that I could attempt a project like this, despite having been trained more in storytelling and literary analysis than social science oral history methodologies.

⁶ At the October 2015 American Studies Association conference, Robert Warrior presented a paper on "Settler Colonialism and the Question of Indigenous Studies" in which he discussed the phenomenon of papers on topics of indigeneity becoming increasingly outnumbered by papers on settler colonialism. In his response paper, Glen Coulthard expressed real concern that this has become another way that settlers remain at the center, leaving both Indigenous knowledge and scholars become marginalized. In other words, while striving for globalized application, the attention to specific land struggles often falls out of the analysis. In the pursuit of global application, these scholars point to how theoretical abstractions can lend to another way that settler scholarship gets circulated, debated and cited, but Indigenous knowledge produced in a specific place gets marginalized. Mahalo to Candace Fujikane for her insight here.

⁷ For more on Indigenous temporalities, see Eve Tuck and Rubén A. Gaztambide-Fernández “Curriculum, Replacement, and Settler, Futurity,” and Mark Rifkin’s *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*.

⁸ Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea is a celebration commemorating August 1, 1843, the day when Hawaiian sovereignty was restored. In that year, Kamehameha III was confronted by rogue British official George Paulette who claimed the British had authority in the islands. The king surrendered in protest. After five months, Admiral Thomas delivered the news from Queen Victoria that the British in fact had no designs on Hawai‘i and sovereignty was restored. The celebration is held in the park that bears Thomas’ name. As of 2016, the park is being threatened with privatization, yet another attack on Hawaiian sovereignty. lahoihoiea.org/

⁹ Terrilee Keko‘olani in discussion with the author, June 26, 2015 and July 15, 2015. All quotes in this section are from these two interviews.

¹⁰ See Lacqueline Lasky, “Waiāhole-Waikāne” in *Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Land, Life and Sovereignty* and Bob Nakata, “The Struggles of the Waiāhole-Waikāne Community Association.” Robert H. Mast, Anne B. Mast’s 1996 volume *Autobiography of Protest in Hawai‘i* features interviews with a range of activists who affirm the importance of Waiāhole –Waikāne including Guy Nakamoto, Brahim Aoudé, John Kelly, John Witeck, George Cooper, and Oliver Lee.

¹¹ Mahalo to Kyle Kajihiro for his insights here.

¹² According to the ILWU, approximately 650 union jobs were lost when Hawaiian Cane & Sugar closed at the end of 2016.

¹³ Mauna Kea is a sacred mountain on Hawai‘i Island targeted for desecration by the proposed Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT). It is understood to be the mountain of the father god Wākea, and the wao akua (upper regions) of the mountain were reserved for spiritual leaders only. Today there are thirteen telescopes on the mountain. The TMT, slated to be the largest in the world, would be the fourteenth. This has been a major site of struggle for the independence movement, and has gained more global attention in 2015 when 600 kia‘i mauna (protectors of the mountain) engaged in civil disobedience blocking entrance by the bulldozers. In August 2015, the Hawai‘i Supreme Court affirmed ki‘ai mauna by ruling that the TMT did not follow correct procedures for a contested case hearing, but the final decision has not been made. Decolonial Pin@ys met with hotel workers at the Aikea Academy to educate them on the controversy and why the Mauna Kea struggle matters to workers. In August 2015, these same workers wore “Respect Land, Respect Labor” buttons made by Decolonial Pin@ys to let astronomers visiting Honolulu for a conference know where workers stood on the issue. In this small way, DPs is helping educate immigrant communities about how they can express solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty.

¹⁴ Han-Ayan is the site of a self-sufficient village in Surigao del Sur, Mindanao, Philippines that has been celebrated for its innovative school (ALCADEV) and sustainable agriculture model to serve the mostly *Lumad* (Indigenous) community. On September 1, 2015, paramilitary forces alleged working in connection with a mining company attacked the community, burning their school, displacing over 2000 people, and killing three leaders, Emerito Samarco, Dionel Campos, and Datu Aurelio Sinzo. Solidarity actions occurred in several cities around the world. Decolonial Pin@ys held a vigil to honor these men, the model of genuine sovereignty Han-Ayan represents, and the ongoing struggle for self-determination of the *Lumad*

in southern Philippines. See Patricia Lourdes Viray, “Lumad Evacuees Steadily Increasing,” *The Philippine Star*, September 11, 2015.

¹⁵ Na‘i Aupuni is the Office of Hawaiian Affairs’ effort to pursue federal recognition with the U.S. government. Some argue that this path would protect Hawaiian entitlements that have been under attack by Republicans who charge anything privileging Hawaiians in Hawai‘i is racial discrimination. Many Hawaiian sovereignty activists see Na‘i Aupuni as a sham process by elites to force federal recognition rather than allowing the time needed for proper political education on all the options and consensus building with Kānaka Maoli. There has been concern as well that this process, like all legal processes, has drained the movement of mana and money. See “Declaration Rejecting Na‘i Aupuni ‘Aha.”

¹⁶ The Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope (DKIST), formerly Advanced Technology Solar Telescope (ATST), is a large-domed solar telescope that is scheduled to be completed by 2018. The plans for this project include a building that is 142.7 foot tall (the largest on Maui island) and 84 feet in diameter as well as a wastewater treatment plant. Its base will require digging five stories deep into the summit of Haleakalā, a sacred mauna (mountain) in the Hawaiian cosmology where Maui captured the sun. For updates on ki‘ai mauna working to protect the Haleakalā, see Kilakila o Haleakalā at kilakilahaleakala.org/site/

¹⁷ Kalo (taro) farmers have been in battle with Alexander and Baldwin, one of “the Big Five” corporations, for diverting stream flows for sugar production since before the time of the overthrow. In April 2016, A&B fell to community pressure and restored some stream flows. In May 2016, the Hawai‘i legislature passed HB 2501 that protects A&B’s right to public water, despite the state constitution and legal rulings that affirm water as a public trust. See Wendy Osher, “Historic Release – Water to Flow at Multiple East Maui Streams,” and Patrick K. Shea, “Legislature Lets Hawaii Down With Passage Of HB 2501,” *Honolulu Civil Beat*, May 5, 2016.

¹⁸ Adam Keawe Manalo Camp in discussion with the author via Skype, August 27, 2015. All quotes in this section are from this interview.”

¹⁹ See Renato Constantino’s *Dissent and Counter-consciousness*.

²⁰ In 2015, Pew Global Attitudes Project asked 40 countries: “Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the U.S.?” Filipin@s ranked highest in responding favorably at 92% (“Opinion of the United States”). More recently, however, President Duterte has made headlines by reaffirming Philippine sovereignty and calling for U.S. troops to get out: “So, those [American] special forces, they have to go. They have to go. In Mindanao, there are so many American [troops] there. They have to go. We will reorient our foreign policy” (Regencia).

²¹ H-3 refers to the state highway on O‘ahu that was built to connect the two military bases in Kāne‘ohe and Pearl Harbor. Kānaka Maoli and their allies protested the violence of this project through multiple methods, but in 1997 the highway was built. See Mark Hamasaki & Kapulani Landgraf, *Ē Luku Wale Ē* (Honolulu, HI: ‘Ai Pōhaku P, 2016) and Vernadette Gonzalez, “Scenic Highways, Masculinity, Modernity, and Mobility,” in *Securing Paradise: Tourism and Militarism in Hawai‘i and the Philippines* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2013).

²² The specific organizations Camp was referring to here include College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CGEP), AnakBayan, Kabataan Partylist, League of Filipino Students and Akbayan.

²³ Kīhei Nahale-a in discussion with the author, June 4, 2015. All quotes in this section are from this interview.

²⁴ Since this interview Kīhei has left Papahāna Kūaola to assist and participate with other organizations looking to create more *‘āina* based, social change projects throughout Hawai‘i. He is currently working on a project called Huliāmahi that will help to create pathways, access and support for schools and *‘āina*-based programs like Papahāna Kūaola to work together to educate youth through the concept of *Aloha ‘Āina*.

²⁵ Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua discusses Richard Day’s work in context of Hawaiian efforts for sovereignty in “Kuleana Lāhui: Collective Responsibility for Hawaiian Nationhood in Activists’ Praxis.”

²⁶ See Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua’s “Kuleana Lāhui: Collective Responsibility for Hawaiian Nationhood in Activists’ Praxis,” Jonathan Kamakwīwo‘ole Osorio’s “Kū‘ē and Kū‘oko‘a (Resistance and Independence): History, Law and Other Faiths,” J. Kēhaulani Kauanui’s “The Multiplicity of Hawaiian Sovereignty Claims and the Struggle for Meaningful Autonomy,” and Hokulani K. Aikau’s “An Indigenous and Settler Futurity without the State (U.S. or otherwise).”

²⁷ Puni Jackson in discussion with the author, June 17, 2015. All quotes in this section are from this interview.

²⁸ For discussion of this practice in comparison with the Hawaiian honi, see Lane Wilken’s “Ungngo: The Breath of Life.”

²⁹ “Leanne Simpson and Glen Coulthard on Dechinta Bush University, Indigenous land-Based Education and Embodied Resurgence.”

³⁰ Kehaulani Vaughn, “Expressions Of Kuleana: Native Hawaiian Resistance In The Diaspora.” According To The Bureau Of Indian Affairs, as of December 2015, the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians of the Acjachemen Nation has petitioned for federal recognition but as of December 2015 this had not yet occurred.

³¹ Mahalo to Keone Nunes, Kim Ku‘ulei, Elise Dela Cruz, and Kalawaia Moore who also lent their time and brilliance to be interviewed for this project.

PART II:

SPEAKING TRUTH TO EMPIRE, TORTURE, AND ENDLESS WAR

CHAPTER 3

AMERICAN TUTELAGE GONE AWRY:

ANTONIO TAGUBA, FILIPINO AMERICANISM, AND THE CRITIQUE OF TORTURE

They said, “You either take them off, or we will.” So I had to take off all my clothes, timidly, the hood on my head. I put my hand to cover my genitals, very embarrassed. These were very difficult moments. I transformed, in a second, from a journalist on the ground who has a social status and people look at me in a certain way—I have my familial and social values and status—to a humiliated person stripped down forcefully, very naked, helpless. This was a huge shock in these moments. These were the first hours of getting into the Abu Ghraib prison. And, of course, there are more details from the following days.

— Salah Hassan, *Al Jazeera* journalist and former Abu Ghraib prisoner

In the meeting, the officials professed ignorance about Abu Ghraib. “Could you tell us what happened?” Wolfowitz asked. Someone else asked, “Is it abuse or torture?” At that point, Taguba recalled, “I described a naked detainee lying on the wet floor, handcuffed, with an interrogator shoving things up his rectum, and said, “That’s not abuse. That’s torture.” There was quiet. — Seymour Hersh, *The New Yorker*

In the last two chapters I explored the possibility of allyship and decolonial alliances between Filipin@s and Kānaka Maoli. In chapter one, I discussed two contemporary plays by Filipin@s in Hawai‘i and their emergent solidarity for Hawaiian movements for self-determination. In chapter two, I talked about what political lessons Kanaka Maoli

activist/protectors brought back from their time in the Philippines and how that has nourished their work for sovereignty or ea in Hawai‘i. Both chapters center the work of decolonized Filipin@s and Hawaiians and their interrogation of U.S. imperialism at both sites. In this chapter, I begin with an assumption that the use of the Philippines and Hawai‘i to launch imperialist wars elsewhere is also a violation of the sovereignty of these two nations. In this respect, I expand the scope of allyship to include those currently under military occupation in the Middle East, and how the vociferous critique of torture by Major General Antonio Taguba opens up a new space of anti-imperialist possibility for Filipin@s in Hawai‘i. Further, I propose a reading strategy for the Taguba Report, one that engages the legacy of 1898 as a critical analytic for understanding this current iteration of empire.

As a person born in the Philippines and raised in Hawai‘i, Taguba is like many of the subjects of this dissertation – people who manage to launch a critique of U.S. foreign policy despite being *doubly exposed* (in both the Philippines and Hawai‘i) to still-enduring discourses of American innocence and self-congratulation. Much has been written about how U.S. hegemony operates in both the Philippines and Hawai‘i, but there is considerably less about how Filipin@s in Hawai‘i must contend with *both* versions, creating an ideological super fortress the U.S. depends on to produce docile subjects. The Philippines and Hawai‘i owe the U.S. for its protection, so the dominant story goes, given Japan’s brutal occupation of the Philippines and its attack on Pearl Harbor. But the Philippines and Hawai‘i would never have become legitimate targets of the Japanese Imperial Army had the U.S. not conquered them in the first place at the end of the 19th century. In this regard, the Philippines and Hawai‘i were protecting the U.S. from attack, not the other way around. This imperial forgetting is institutionalized in both nations and in mainstream U.S. national memory that depends on the mythology of “the good war” to justify

ongoing imperialism in the Middle East and elsewhere. I argue this “double exposure” provides necessary context to understand the political subjectivity of contemporary Filipin@s in Hawai‘i today, whose depressed conditions make them easy recruits for those same wars in the Middle East. Put simply, there is precious little opportunity for Filipin@s in Hawai‘i to gain access to anti-imperialist political history, so those who do launch a critique of U.S. actions past and present must be seen as resisting over a century of colonial propaganda deeply entrenched in the Philippines, in Hawai‘i, and in the U.S. in general.¹

Part of what motivates this chapter is my own family’s long and contradictory relationship to U.S. empire. As is so common among Filipin@ families in the U.S. and Hawai‘i, I have many male relatives who are extremely proud of their service in the U.S. military. Nonetheless, there have been moments when they have quietly confided in me their misgivings on the subject of U.S. foreign policy past and present. One of my uncles, a Vietnam War veteran, admitted how angry he is about the biased education he received in Hawai‘i’s public schools. He was an adult when he learned about the overthrow of Lili‘uokalani, and over 60 when he learned about the Philippine-American war. It’s likely that my uncle’s father, my grandfather, had memories of the U.S. occupation given he was born in Bohol in 1901 at the height of the war, and Bohol was an island devastated by village burnings, the water cure, and other U.S. war crimes.² In our family’s oral history, the poverty my grandparents’ endured and their stunted educations were never attributed to the conditions of U.S. war and occupation. Instead, like many descendants of Hawai‘i’s plantations, we got the message that we were *lucky* to come to Hawai‘i and indebted to America for offering an escape from the Philippines, a place seemingly plagued by an ahistorical poverty all of their own making. After the Iraq war began, this same Vietnam veteran uncle went to work as a cook for KBR, the controversial military contractor formerly

known as Halliburton. In Iraq he supervised a multilingual kitchen that reminded him of “plantation days” in Hawai‘i and the exploitation of desperately poor immigrant workers under the thumb of obscenely rich U.S. corporations. The war in Iraq, he came to realize, is “the biggest rip off of the American people you’ve ever seen.” While his focus was more on the crime of war profiteering than the crimes against the Iraqi people, his comments suggested to me that a new day might have arrived. Growing up in the shadow of Pearl Harbor and the euphoria of U.S. statehood, my uncle’s generation’s “double exposure” was unremitting. As young men from poor immigrant families, once they came of age they were eager to prove themselves the brave defenders of U.S. democracy and freedom. But as aging veterans in this post-9/11 era, they were troubled by the prospect of endless war to secure endless profits for the U.S. Like Fanon who also fought in the army of his own colonial oppressor, I began to consider the possibilities for militarized Filipin@s in Hawai‘i to articulate their own positionality within U.S. empire. Sometimes, perhaps, tutelage goes awry.

Antonio Taguba: From Local Boy Soldier to Global Critic of Torture

Taguba comes from a family that dramatically epitomizes what I mean by “double exposure.” His father survived the Bataan Death March and his mother was a nurse to Japanese prisoners of war during World War II. Ironically, he was born in Tampalac, near Manila, the town where the first shots of the Philippine-American war were fired. He spent his adolescence in Wahiawa, a military town on O‘ahu, an island which is home of the U.S. Pacific Command, and several military bases including Pearl Harbor Navy Base, Kāne‘ohe Marine Base and Hickam Air Force Base. In this second militarized zone, he learned about what Vernadette Gonzalez has called “aloha patriotism,” U.S.-style multiculturalism, and more discourses of

gratitude for American “protection.” He graduated from Leilehua High School in 1968 at a time when JROTC was mandatory (“Conversations with History”). He joined the Army soon after graduating from Idaho State University. Over his long career, he was stationed in Korea, Germany, Texas and Oklahoma; earned three master’s degrees; and raised a family. He worked his way up to becoming a two-star Major General in the Army, making him the second highest-ranking Filipin@ American in the U.S. military. Taguba is unswerving in his patriotism, and for him that means the U.S. adheres to the Constitution and instruments of international law even in times of war. It is my task in this chapter to analyze the man, his critique of torture (“The Taguba Report”) and this compelling story of internal critique within the U.S. military.

“The Taguba Report” is undoubtedly the best-known and most controversial text in this dissertation. If literature’s task is to help us make sense of the world and tell a story of our place within it, I propose that we position this text in a genealogy of protest history of Filipin@s in Hawai‘i and our long complicated relationship to the United States, inaugurated through war and genocide in 1898. As the author is a Filipino from Hawai‘i who had launched such a long and public denunciation of U.S. torture policy, his report deserves particular attention. Admittedly, however, Taguba would resist being grouped with those who consider themselves “critics of U.S. *empire*.” After my interview with him in August 2015, it became clear that Taguba considers himself no whistleblower. He remains loyal as ever to the U.S. military and had never intended his report to be characterized as a form of “dissent.” Nonetheless, those who embrace dissent as a critical tool to end imperialist war have treasured his report. It is because of him that America and the world knows of the atrocities that U.S. military forces and its subcontractors committed at Abu Ghraib prison. It was his team that found thousands of photographs and videotapes taken by soldiers – both men and women – entertaining themselves by posing with prisoner bodies,

some of whom were naked, raped, or dead, sometimes giving a thumbs-up to the camera. Those iconic and humiliating images of the tortured prisoners – naked, bound and hooded – remain the starkest reminder of the eroding power of international law in the post-9/11 era. The “Taguba Report,” (originally entitled “Article 15-6 Investigation of the 800th Military Police Brigade”) has circulated far beyond the reach or motives of its author. What was once classified as “secret” is now widely available on hundreds of websites all over the world investigating U.S. torture past and present. Although it’s not a text about the Philippines or Hawai‘i, the report and its afterlife tell an important story of one example of a Filipino from Hawai‘i holding the U.S. accountable for its atrocities on its latest group of so-called “insurgents.”

In this chapter, I argue that the Taguba Report tells a story of American tutelage gone awry. I begin with the language of the text itself and its multiple tensions that mirror the contradictions of militarized subjects and the U.S. empire itself. Taguba’s rise as community hero – even as he was calling out U.S. war crimes – signals an important shift in what is considered allowable and even laudable speech for a good Filipin@ American patriot, especially one from Hawai‘i. His journey from “local boy” soldier to globally recognized critic of torture destabilizes the notion that the thousands “little brown brothers” (and sisters) from the U.S.-occupied Pacific – so easily recruited into the U.S. military and so indebted to its protection – will tow the line and protect America’s secrets. Taguba embodies and invigorates the political potential of the militarized Filipin@-from-Hawai‘i subject. Even as he resists the notion of himself as one who dissents, he has laid the groundwork for those in and outside the military to blow the whistle on torture, imperialist war, and other crimes against our bodies and land.

The Taguba Report

In January 2004, Major General Antonio Taguba was charged to lead the investigation of prisoner abuse at the now-infamous Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. The Army needed someone with credentials and availability, so as a two-star general stationed nearby in Kuwait, he fit the bill. This was three years after 9/11, two years into the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan, and one year into the U.S.-led war in Iraq, and jingoism in the U.S. was at an all-time high. Any superficial commitment the U.S. had to human rights seemed to be eroding on several fronts, both internally and externally, aided greatly through the 2001 USA Patriot Act. The Bush administration had decided that those held at Guantanamo Bay Prison in Cuba would be designated “enemy combatants” rather than prisoners of war, thus denying those individuals the rights guaranteed under the Geneva Convention such as the right to a trial, the right to proper and humane treatment, access to medical care, and freedom from torture. According to University of San Francisco law professor Peter Jan Honigsberg, “enemy combatants” emerged via the advice of Pentagon advisor William Lietzau who coached Deputy Secretary Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz to use the term with the press *after* the policy had already been implemented (Honigsberg). When questioned about what techniques are permissible against those held in custody, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld explained, “I’m not a lawyer and I’m not in to that end of *the business*” (emphasis mine, Rumsfeld). As Judith Butler and many others have expressed, the press contributed to the pro-war hysteria, allowing for little debate about the legality or necessity of these wars, and even casting those critical of the “Wars on Terror” as “excuseniks” (Butler 9). This was the political climate Taguba faced when he headed to Abu Ghraib prison on the assignment that would ultimately end his career.

As the epigraph at the start of this chapter suggests, Taguba insists that the U.S. honor its commitments to international law and human rights. In my interview with him in Honolulu in

August 2015, he made the following comment, and communicating to me with every syllable how deeply held are his convictions:

Mistreating, abusing, torturing detainees and civilians is a violation of the Geneva Convention, against the Convention of Inhumane Treatment of Civilians, both of which the U.S. is a signatory. It's against the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the U.S. Constitution. Need I say more? We train our troops on these rules.

(Compoc 104)

His insistence that international law be followed is evident in his organization of the report itself and the language used throughout. Rather than an appendix in the back, there is three-page list of references placed in the beginning directly after the Table of Contents, the first seven of which are all Geneva Convention documents. The first listed is entitled, "The Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, 12 August 1949," thus signaling to the reader immediately that Taguba considers those held are "prisoners" and deserve the protections due to prisoners. Other documents detail the protections that must be guaranteed to the wounded, the sick, refugees, and war victims. Taguba's choice to prioritize these documents stands in stark contrast with the attempt of the Bush Administration through the Patriot Act to expunge these protections because Al Qaeda are not signatories to those conventions. In this way, Taguba signals to the reader that his report will depend first and foremost on the international conventions that the U.S. was legally bound to uphold in every war since the close of World War II, that "good war" when the U.S. had more moral authority. The final reference is to the "Uniform Code of Military Justice and Manual for Courts Martial, 2002 Edition," providing one contemporary document used by the military to train and guide personnel in times of war, standing firm against any tempting exceptions for the "war on terror."

The report is considered exceptional in this genre of military reports because of the straightforwardness of Taguba's language. Four other reports were written about Abu Ghraib in 2004, but Taguba's has had the most widely circulated, largely because of his refusal to mince words about what he and his 22-member team uncovered: "numerous incidents of sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses were inflicted on several detainees" (16). To this day, this is the phrase that has become synonymous with the report itself. By choosing "sadistic" as his first descriptor, Taguba draws attention to the perversion of the soldiers drawing pleasure from the pain of those "others" under their watch at the prison. Taguba continues: "This systemic and illegal abuse of detainees was intentionally perpetrated by several members of the military police guard force" (16). His willingness to name the abuses *systemic* challenges the notion this was only a small problem among a few bad apples, which was the central defense upon which President Bush and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld would rely. His descriptions of the military police actions as *illegal* and *intentional* serve as an important reminders that these rules are not arbitrary or optional for a country that prides itself on being "a nation of laws." Another key phrases often quoted is the "egregious acts and grave breaches of international law" found at Abu Ghraib (50). In a jingoistic era when euphemism prevailed and all language seemed to be emptied of meaning, these phrases made the Taguba Report a triumph of plainspokenness, especially coming from an Army general.

The Taguba Report, like many military reports classified as secret, is dense with the military jargon and acronyms familiar to its intended audience. However, as he begins to describe the details of the soldiers' actions, the sense of safety and order provided by that professional detachment gives way to a sense of horror and chaos. Even though no pictures are included in the report, his words paint an unnerving and unforgettable picture of the soldiers'

actions as both sadistic and relentless. In one section he gives 21 examples of soldier actions, 14 of which mention the words naked, sex, rape or sodomy. Taguba makes obvious the unrelenting enthusiasm of the soldiers using action verbs that evoke the spectacle of an athletic arena: punching, slapping, kicking, jumping, biting, pouring, sodomizing, forcibly arranging. His use of gerunds (punching, slapping, kicking) rather than past tense verbs (punched, slapped, kicked) heightens the sense that these actions continue in the present, reducing any sense of comfort that these crimes have been put to rest. Soldiers were/are torturing innocent people with guiltless abandon. The torture chamber becomes their imperial playhouse where guns, dogs, chemical lights and broom sticks act as the props, and sandbags and women's underwear are the costumes. The recreational aspect of the torture and the variety of methods used underscore the outrageousness of these actions; not only are they violating international law, they are having fun while doing it.

Through his straightforwardness and the length of the report (the Taguba Report is over twice the length of the one written by the International Red Cross), Taguba demonstrates his determination to make his superiors take torture seriously, which was undoubtedly necessary in the years following 9/11. He includes evidence from dozens of witness interviews from military personnel Brigadier General Janis Karpinski down to Army Specialist Joseph M. Darby, the soldier who first blew the whistle on Abu Ghraib torture. He includes reports from psychiatrists, interpreters, dog handlers and thirteen prisoners. He makes repeated reference to the instruments of international law the U.S. has signed onto. At several points he mentions that prisoners are entitled *to have their rights posted*, and such notice must be available in English and the detainees' language (21). Through the repetition, Taguba communicates that the Geneva Convention cannot and should not be ignored at Abu Ghraib or any facility under U.S. military

command. His defense of the right of those who do not speak the language of the torturer is also notable given the barrage of racism and Islamophobia in the media at this time when it seemed no person from the Middle East could ever be declared an innocent or, if guilty, still deserving of human rights protections. To paraphrase Judith Butler, Taguba insists the “frame of war” we use to comprehend this torture must be international law and human rights.

There are multiple ways the Taguba Report provides a kind of wake up call for readers. Both the letter of the text and the photographs that came later announced to the world what the U.S. – its government, its military, its CIA, and its corporate subcontractors – had become. The public was made aware that for the Bush Administration, international law is a tool to be manipulated or ignored. No one reading this document could believe that the U.S. is a nation of laws, freedom and human rights. Another wake up call was the widespread use of photography at Abu Ghraib that revealed something new about these wars and those who fight them. Over 2000 photos and videos have been uncovered, revealing soldiers eager to pose with the bodies of those they had tortured, raped and/or killed. Clearly soldiers had no fear of consequences if they were willing to document their actions so readily and so gleefully. Through Abu Ghraib, the wars on/of terror came to be synonymous with a “selfie” American narcissism with an imperialist twist.

Despite these alarming details and the strongly worded tone, there are also ways the Taguba report is strangely understated. In terms of language, he uses the word “abuse” 21 times compared with the word “torture” which appears *once* and only in a qualifying phrase: “to *simulate* electric torture” [my emphasis] (17). The word “detainee” is used 292 times, and the word “prisoner” only 29, and most of these are references to the international human rights instruments or quotes from interviewees, such as this one from, Sergeant Javal S. Davis: “I

witnessed prisoners in the MI [military interrogation] hold section, wing 1A being made to do various things that I would question morally” (17). So while he makes use of human rights instruments for *prisoners*, he cooperates with the Bush administration’s use of “detainee.” Importantly, Taguba included no photographs in the report, although the images and videos would prove to be the most damning evidence of torture yet. Later he defended the decision of the Obama administration to keep photographic evidence of torture classified, not because it might further violate the victims, but because it would “hurt our soldiers in the field.” Although prisoners had been raped, sodomized and/or killed, these crimes are not included in the specific reasons why military officers and private contractors should be reprimanded or relieved of duty. Instead the reasons given include “lack of leadership and for failing to take corrective security measures,” “alleged to have taken nude pictures of his female Soldiers without their knowledge” and “consuming alcohol” [42]. There is also no mention of soldiers using racist or anti-Muslim insults, although there is the curious recommendation for soldiers to be taught “Arab cultural awareness” (20). There is also no mention of homophobia although there is clearly widespread practice of forcing naked prisoners to perform gay sex acts.

There is a palpable tension in the report that reflects the impossible position Taguba was placed in: tell the truth and lose his career, or not tell the truth and lose his integrity. Taguba told me about the enormous pressure he felt to protect his 22-member team whose careers would also be put into jeopardy if he wrote a report in a way that minimized what they had found. Three other military reports (Fay, Church, Ryder) were also conducted on Abu Gharib prior to Taguba’s arrival, but of these military-authored reports, Taguba’s was the only one calling for real accountability: reprimand, demotion and dismissal. In an interview on *Democracy Now*, Pulitzer-prize winning journalist Seymour Hersh praised Taguba’s actions and described the

significance of the report thus: “I’ve read a lot of reports in my life, and all of a sudden I’m reading a report by a general who’s actually criticizing his peers, his fellow two-star generals ... in which he’s talking about systematic abuse, in which he’s clearly indicating that this was way beyond just a few MPs” (“Seymour Hersh Reveals”). The abuse may have been systemic, but he could not say much more than that. Before going to Abu Ghraib, Taguba was told by his three-star commanding general, “You will do the fact finding. You will not speculate” (Compoc 94). He obeyed this order faithfully, making sure to focus on the limited scope of his investigation (those he outranked) and never venture a guess on whether the widespread torture was ordered from above or by whom. In the document itself and the hearings that followed, his explanation was always *lack of leadership* in following correct military procedures that allowed the torture to proliferate.

Defending the Report

Although marked “Secret/No Foreign Dissemination,” Taguba’s report and the photos were leaked almost immediately to the press and quickly drew headlines from around the world. Seymour Hersh, made famous for covering the My Lai massacre of the Vietnam War, broke the Abu Ghraib story in *The New Yorker* by April 2004, and Dan Rather covered the story for *60 minutes* soon after in a segment that would earn him a Peabody Award. There had been reports of prison torture from Guantanamo Bay, but the photos from Abu Ghraib were particularly incriminating. Pressure was building for accountability from the top. *The Economist* ran a cover story on Abu Ghraib in May 2004, featuring a photo of a hooded prisoner standing on a box, his arms outstretched and electric wires attached to his body. In the article, entitled “Resign, Rumsfeld,” the editors argued:

[T]he abuse of these prisoners is not the only damaging error that has been made and it forms part of a culture of extra-legal behavior that has been set at the highest level. Responsibility for what has occurred needs to be taken—and to be seen to be taken—at the highest level too. It is plain what that means. The secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, should resign. And if he won't resign, Mr. Bush should fire him.

Relatively unknown for his 34 years in the military, the Taguba suddenly found himself at the center of a media firestorm that he did not choose to start.

In the weeks and months after the scandal broke, Taguba received his own wake up call when his friends and colleagues shunned him or treated him with open contempt. Most telling was his first meeting with Rumsfeld. Taguba, ever the loyal patriot, was shocked to learn how much his values deviated from those of the Secretary. In “The General’s Report: How Antonio Taguba, Who Investigated the Abu Ghraib Scandal, Became One of Its Casualties,” Seymour Hersh describes the meeting when Taguba first met Rumsfeld, an encounter that was both illuminating and ominous:

“Here . . . comes . . . that *famous* General Taguba—of the Taguba report!”

Rumsfeld declared, in a mocking voice. The meeting was attended by Paul Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld’s deputy; Stephen Cambone, the Under-Secretary of Defense for Intelligence; General Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (J.C.S.); and General Peter Schoomaker, the Army chief of staff, along with Craddock and other officials. Taguba, describing the moment nearly three years later, said, sadly, “I thought they wanted to know. I assumed they wanted to know. I was ignorant of the setting.” (Hersh, “The General’s Report)

Taguba describes how in that moment he realized that he was vastly outnumbered by these officials who had no interest in learning the truth. In this setting, he defended the use of the word “torture,” even as the word does not appear in the report itself. In my interview with him he explained: “When the report and photos of abuse and torture were leaked to the media in April 2004, just about every senior military officer and senior government leader went into denial. Some of my own cohorts went into denial because they were protecting themselves” (Compoc 94). Nonetheless, Taguba stood by his report, defending himself against accusations that he was to “overzealous” or “incompetent,” all the while knowing his career was doomed (Compoc 94, “Conversations with History”).

Taguba was careful to use only the most meticulously conservative language in describing the reasons why Abu Ghraib happened. But when called to testify before the Senate Armed Services Committee on May 11, 2004 about his Report, Taguba faced senators who were eager to get him to admit who he thought who was really responsible. For example, Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI), spoke more plainly:

The despicable actions described in General Taguba’s report, not only reek of abuse, they reek of an organized effort and methodical preparation for interrogation. The collars used on prisoners, the dogs and the cameras did not suddenly appear out of thin air. These acts of abuse were not the spontaneous actions of lower ranking enlisted personnel who lacked the proper supervision. These attempts to extract information from prisoners by abusive and degrading methods were *clearly planned and suggested by others*. (emphasis mine, “Transcript: Taguba, Cambone”)

Taguba refused to speculate on the culpability of any officials above the battalion commander who was in charge of the prison itself and repeatedly emphasized the limited scope of his investigation. When asked to confirm that “the abuse” was widespread, he replied only with the dates of the investigative interviews: “They were between mid to late October and as late as December [2003], perhaps early January.” When asked point blank how he thought the abuse was allowed to happen, he simply repeated the same mantra from the report itself: “a failure of leadership.” At one point, Sen. Levin provoked Taguba to be more explicit:

LEVIN: Now, that’s more than a failure of leadership. That’s an active decision on the part of leadership. It’s not just oversight or negligence or neglect or sloppiness, but purposeful, willful determination to use these techniques as part of an interrogation process. Would you include that in your definition of failure of leadership?

TAGUBA: Yes, sir, they were. (“Transcript: Taguba, Cambone”)

As with the report, Taguba based all his comments on the Geneva Conventions and the Uniform Code of Military Justice, making it clear that he was only reflecting back what his lifetime of training in this institution had taught him.

For all of Taguba’s efforts to castigate torture as unlawful, there were dozens more government officials employed to justify its use and encourage soldiers to employ it. By the end of 2004, the “Torture Memos” would be released to the public, which would make clear to the world how deliberate the Bush Administration was in its advocacy of torture. As early as 2001 when the Patriot Act was being signed, the White House Office of Legal Counsel was conceiving ways to justify torture, or “enhanced interrogation techniques.” Several members within the CIA expressed confusion about whether waterboarding and other controversial techniques were

actually legal and wanted Congressional approval, which never happened. This abuse of executive power still continued into the Obama administration. While many argue that torture is nothing new to U.S. foreign policy, no one can deny that torture was reinvigorated in the aftermath of 9/11 and will certainly be employed into the future.

The Taguba Report brought tangible results for those imprisoned at Abu Ghraib: 200 people were reprimanded and over 700 prisoners were released (Taguba, “Stop the Spin”). Brigadier General Janis Karpinski who commanded Abu Ghraib was the highest-ranking person reprimanded; she was demoted to colonel. Eleven soldiers and military intelligence personnel were charged and convicted, none of them above the rank of sergeant. Cpl. Charles A. Graner was sentenced to ten years; Pfc. Lynndie England was sentenced to three years (“Prosecutions and Convictions”). After the 2006 mid-term elections, when Republicans fared poorly due in part to opposition to the war, Rumsfeld finally did resign. Taguba was transferred to a desk job in Washington, D.C., a lateral move that let him know his career would progress no further. In late 2006, he was instructed to retire, and was given no reason. Despite having given 34 years of his life to the military, he retired without protest (“Conversations with History”). By upsetting the careers of Rumsfeld and Taguba, both proponents and opponents of torture were sent a contradictory message. In this way, the Taguba Report accomplished exactly what the Bush Administration needed it to do: produce limited accountability among low-level soldiers, protect the White House from culpability, and leave the practice of torture firmly in place. In the years that followed however, Taguba emerged as an even nastier thorn in empire’s side.

Hauntings of History

Not all of the “insurrectos” who were killed, though, were always insurrectos, or killed in combat. Some were civilians who’d been executed. Others – whether insurrectos or not – had been tortured to death. The commonest form of torture was known as the “water cure,” and it was so common that, on Bohol, toward the end of the war, people joked about getting it – and then got it. It became, as its nickname suggests, a kind of liquid panacea, a cure for whatever you couldn’t kill – a cure for disloyalty, a cure for native “insolence,” a cure for the *insurrection* – that the army doled out like the shots for the small pox it also dispensed. Ostensibly, the “water cure” was used to elicit information. But the information it obtained was always suspect. And people died from it.

— Norman Cameron, “The U.S. Military Occupation of Bohol: 1900-1902”

I began this chapter with the goal of foregrounding the lessons of 1898 as a critical analytic for this current iteration of U.S. empire in the Middle East. If empire’s central task is to instruct its population in the proper art of remembering and forgetting, the U.S. has done an exceptional job of pretending the Philippine-American war never occurred. But the wars on/of terror have demanded a return to this forgotten history through many inconvenient similarities and points of comparison. As the above epigraph points out, the U.S. committed war crimes against civilians including mass killings, mass detention, and collective punishment. The war crimes committed in Haditha and Fallujah recalled the infamous massacres at Samar and Bud Dajo in the Philippines. The enhanced interrogation technique known as “waterboarding” used against Iraqi “insurgents” was previously known as “the water cure” when the U.S. inaugurated its use against Filipino “insurrectos.” And of course the scandal over the Abu Ghraib photos created a crisis in support for “Operation Iraqi Freedom” that was not unlike the controversy that

brewed over a century ago when photographs of mass graves and self-satisfied torturers in the Philippines let the American public know what atrocities were being committed in the name of their freedom and security.³ In “The Water Cure: Debating Torture and Counterinsurgency—a Century Ago,” Paul Kramer makes the connection explicit through his close examination of military history, the text for which sits alongside a large disturbing photograph of U.S. military administering the water cure. In this light of these discomfiting similarities, the Army made a curious choice in assigning a person of Filipin@ descent to investigate the Abu Ghraib scandal. After the photos were released, the infinite labor required to keep the Philippine-American war in the past seemed to buckle, with Taguba’s Filipin@ body ushering in a stark reminder of all America would rather forget.

There are other ways that Taguba’s Filipin@ background is an inconvenience to the project of America’s imperial amnesia toward its long list of crimes against the Filipin@ people. Journalists never fail to mention that Taguba is the son of a Bataan Death March survivor, that site of Japanese war crimes against Filipin@s and Americans. For example, the May 2004 *New York Times* “man in the spotlight” article, opens with: “As the son of a survivor of a Japanese prison camp whose military service went all but unrecognized for decades, Maj. Gen. Antonio M. Taguba learned early lessons about right and wrong” (Jehl). Taguba’s actions are given even greater moral authority via his father’s sacrifice and bravery in confronting Japanese torturers, a well-rehearsed site of American self-congratulation now backfiring to expose imperial hypocrisy. In an National Public Radio report that same month, Crawley interviewed a WWII veteran, a great admirer of Taguba, who was also a prisoner of war under the Japanese who says: “I was captured and stripped naked, [made to] jump in place for three, four hours. You may have read about how the Japanese treated these prisoners of war and it’s really sad that *we did the same*

thing to the Iraqi prisoners.” All good Filipin@ Americans know how the Philippines was bestowed what Mimi Nguyen refers to as the “gift of freedom” and the resultant debt forever owed to the United States. This state of eternal indebtedness requires insisting on nonequivalence between Japanese war crimes and American war crimes, as well as a commitment to considering America’s enemies Filipin@ enemies. Undoubtedly this signals a major disruption in this discourse that a WWII veteran is willing to make such a statement affirming Iraqi prisoners’ rights to the press in Washington DC at the height of the pro-war hysteria.

As the maltreated Filipin@ American veteran, Taguba prompts awareness of the many injustices still facing those who fought in World War II. “The Good War” has been sentimentalized as the time when the Philippines and the Americans fought side by side as equals, but Filipin@ American veterans know this equality was short lived. Their movement tells another important story of Filipin@ American patriotic dissent. At the outbreak of World War II, young Filipin@ recruits were promised that if they joined the military, they would be granted U.S. citizenship and could claim full veterans’ benefits. Congress rescinded this promise in 1946. After more than sixty years of advocacy, Congress, in 2009, authorized a one-time payment of \$15,000 for Filipin@ Americans in the U.S. and \$9,000 for non-citizen Filipin@s. Most consider this amount an insult, especially considering how few are still alive to receive it (18,000), and the amount of red tape it takes to secure it (Guillermo). Filipin@ American veterans learned how disposable they were to the Americans, a lesson that Taguba learned as well, even from his exalted position. But unlike the WWII veterans who could advocate for themselves as a group, Taguba faced the injustice of his lost career alone.

In *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, Avery Gordon explores how under racialized capitalism, the present is always haunted by the past. Slavery in the U.S.

and violence against the disappeared in Argentina epitomize the kind of repressed histories that will disturb official narratives in persistent ways. That which is left undiscussed must be accounted for to understand the meaning of present day events. Gordon describes haunting as “that moment...when disturbed feelings won’t go away, when easily living one day and then the next becomes impossible, when the present seamlessly becoming ‘the future’ gets entirely jammed up” (2). For Gordon, a haunting prompts us to see things anew: “When the repression isn’t working anymore the trouble that results creates conditions that demand re-narrativization” (3). History rears its head, forcing uncomfortable truths to be confronted, disturbing us and urging us that something must be done (7).

In a similar vein, in *Suspended Apocalypse: White Supremacy, Genocide, and the Filipino Condition* Dylan Rodriguez argues more attention must be paid to the specific historical conditions that brought the Philippines under U.S. control in the first place, namely, the Philippine-American war, as well as the legacy of neocolonial violence that continues into the present. For Rodriguez, genocide is the structuring logic that defines the U.S. nation-state itself. He writes:

U.S. national discourse – from the jurisprudential to the popular/mass cultural – is generally illiterate when it comes to addressing the multiple dimensions and complexly entangled histories of the American continental and global project as a mosaic of mobilizations for, and institutionalizations of, genocidal and protogenocidal force. In this context, it is especially noteworthy that the production of U.S. genocide across North America and in the Philippine archipelago preceded the era of fully industrialized warfare and the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction. (138)

For Rodriguez any narrativization of America that cannot confront the central role of genocide is politically suspect. Rodriguez's intervention investigates how a patriotic Filipino Americanism is a form of cultural belonging that demands keeping this history repressed.

Gordon and Rodriguez's reminders about historiography are useful here in considering Taguba's changing political subjectivity in this critical period between the release of the report in 2004, and his forced retirement in 2007. How might the history of U.S. conquest "haunt" the Taguba report and the man himself? Furthermore, how might Taguba's actions have "haunted" the U.S. in return, thrusting empire's contradictions into full view? How might both offer a prompting that "something must be done"?

Post-Retirement Taguba

If sending Taguba into retirement was meant to silence him, it backfired. On the contrary, it seems only to have emboldened him. Post-retirement is the period of Taguba's life that defines what I mean by "tutelage gone awry." As was said earlier, in his 2007 interview with Hersh, he reveals the behind-the-scenes confrontations with Rumsfeld with his lies and corruption, as well as those of the top military brass. In the most memorable part of the Hersh interview, he explains how he was treated by General John Abizaid, then the head of Central Command, who warned Taguba menacingly: "You and your report will be investigated." This was one of the many experiences that led Taguba to finally speak his mind plainly: "I'd been in the Army thirty-two years by then, and it was the first time that *I thought I was in the Mafia*" (Emphasis mine, Hersh, "The General's Report"). Taguba took three years from the scandal to grant a public interview, which he gives to Hersh, the journalist whose name is synonymous with breaking the story of the My Lai massacre. Now in his first year of retirement, he's comparing the military to the mafia.

It's an extraordinary turn around for a two-star Army general who has been "enamored" of the military all his life (Compoc 92). He may not consider himself a whistleblower, but he's not opposed to granting an interview with the renowned journalists who vindicate them.

In a second key example of post-retirement fearlessness, Taguba wrote the preface for the 2008 Physicians for Human Rights' Report *Broken Laws, Broken lives: Medical Evidence of Torture by the U.S. Personnel and Its Impact* in which he employed his strongest language yet: "After years of disclosures by government investigations, media accounts, and reports from human rights organizations, there is no longer any doubt as to whether the current [Bush] administration has committed war crimes. The only question that remains to be answered is whether those who ordered the use of torture will be held to account" (Hashemian viii). This was to be the first time that Taguba used the term "war crimes" in addition to "torture." This preface, while short, has been quoted thousands of times by opponents of torture around the world. Unlike the Taguba Report that was defined by its limited scope in that he could only discuss those he outranked and only those at Abu Ghraib, in this civilian document he had no such parameters. Undoubtedly Taguba knew while writing the 2004 report that Bush ordered the torture, but was prohibited from saying so. Now with Physicians for Human Rights, Taguba has found his voice and wants senior officials to be accountable for crimes in Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, and anywhere else the U.S. military commits them.

Taguba is non-partisan in his views and has remained a vocal opponent of Bush and Obama's permissive policies on torture, a term he now uses easily. In his editorial to the *New York Times* in August 2014, "Stop the C.I.A. Spin on the Senate Torture Report," Taguba continued to call for adherence to the Geneva Conventions, and a return to human rights that he believes the United States epitomizes.

Taguba has emerged from the scandal a “straightshooting” patriotic hero. In this regard, Taguba’s story is one of triumph over his detractors. He has won several “outstanding” Filipin@ American awards including the 2004 “Friendship Award” given by the Philippine American Foundation, the 2005 “American Courage Award” by the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, the “best and brightest” of 2008 by *Filipinas Magazine* and the 2011 Asian American Government Executives Network’s ‘Leadership in Public Service’ Award.” The University of Maryland has a “Major General Antonio Taguba Profiles in Courage and Leadership” scholarship. Today he serves as community ambassador for the American Association for Retired Persons, where he advocates for awareness for the “silver tsunami” of elders in need of long-term care. Taguba also continues to advocate for Filipin@ American veterans and their long struggle to secure equal benefits and recognition. In short, he has retained his “Filipino American hero” status right alongside his unflinching and public critique of the torture criminals in the White House.

Despite the fanfare, undoubtedly Taguba must have paid a hidden price for his audacity. Although he never mentions death threats to himself or his family, there is no reason to believe Taguba would be spared such indignities considering the plight of Joseph Darby, the original whistleblower who first released the photos at Abu Ghraib. Darby’s identity was not protected after releasing the photos; in fact, he was publically outed by Rumsfeld during the Senate Armed Services Committee hearing in 2004 (Cooper). In an interview with Anderson Cooper in 2006, Darby described how his fear of retaliation for releasing the photos was so severe he slept with a gun under his pillow for a month. Once his tour was complete, the Army told Darby that after doing an investigation, it was no longer safe for him and his wife to return to their hometown in Maryland, the place where they had spent their entire lives. Colin Engelbach, the commander of

Darby's Veterans of Foreign Wars post, gave examples of what people in the town were saying about him: "He was a rat. He was a traitor." (Cooper). Darby's story serves as an important reminder of the devastating consequences faced by military whistleblowers, even those without a history of colonialism with the United States like Taguba. In this next section, I consider what Taguba's hero status might signal in terms of the efforts to build larger, anti-imperialist politics among Filipin@ Americans, especially those in Hawai'i.

Taguba: The Interview

It would be a mistake to read Taguba's critiques, particularly his "mafia" comment, as evidence of a nascent, anti-imperialist political awakening. In my interview with Taguba in August 2015, it became apparent very quickly that despite all that he had gone through in exposing Abu Ghraib torture and losing his career did *not* create a crisis of faith for Taguba's patriotism. Torture must stop, he argues, because it is un-American and tarnishes the Army's reputation. He is not afraid to question the usefulness of the wars on terror, even asking "What did we accomplish there?" (100). He also has strong words for the politicians who start such questionable wars in the first place: "These people have never carried a rifle...but they are willing to sacrifice American troops just so they can sound right on the political scene!" (97). However, Taguba's critique abruptly ends there. Even with an Army son in Afghanistan who shares these same doubts about the real consequence and interminability of these wars, Taguba remains unswerving in his belief that the U.S. and its military represent a force of good in the world: "We get trained to fight this nation's wars, to provide humanitarian assistance, to provide disaster relief, to be peacekeepers, to protect the borders of the U.S., all of the above. The U.S. Armed Forces are in some 120 countries today throughout the world. That's what we do"

(Compoc 93). Despite the degradation of losing his career, and the racism that has plagued that career, his loyalty remains steadfast (Hersh, “The General’s Report”). He touts the “120 countries” with pride, impervious to how controversial those bases have been and continue to be, and castigating those “dissenters” like Ehren Watada who disobey an order to go to war, even an unjust one.

With regard to the Philippines and Hawai‘i, perhaps it is unsurprising that he has no criticisms of U.S. imperialism past or present. With regard to the annexations of 1898, he has this to say: “Well you know, you can’t go back and turn the tide on history. I mean, it happened. What would it have been if they were not annexed? How would they be able to govern themselves? Well, I don’t know. But is Hawai‘i today any better than 1898? I think so” (Compoc 97). With regard to movements for sovereignty in Puerto Rico, his political views sound like any other military leader emboldened by imperial might: “Take a look at the Puerto Rican model. Puerto Rico was also annexed in 1898. They have relied on the U.S. for governance and funding. And now they are bankrupt. Puerto Ricans have always wanted their independence. But they can’t even govern themselves. So are we on the realistic side or is it more emotional? I think it’s more emotional” (Compoc 99). Taguba’s castigation of Hawaiian and Puerto Rican self-governance conforms exactly to McKinley’s rationale for annexation and invasion in 1898: “we could not leave them to themselves—they were unfit for self-government—and they would soon have anarchy and misrule over there worse than Spain’s was.” Despite everything he had learned at Abu Ghraib about torture and how U.S. foreign / war policy actually works, and despite losing his career for telling the truth about those war crimes, Taguba still pledges his allegiance to empire’s flag. His words recall Dylan Rodriguez, who reminds us not to be surprised when Filipino Americans defend empire in the strongest terms:

[I]n the heat of the U.S. pacification campaign the historians agree was characterized by mass-based ecological and human distraction that extracted Philippine casualties numbering in at least the hundreds of thousands, it is stunningly easy to find Filipino appointees of a genocidal U.S. colonialist state who were not only willing to accept the trappings of American governmental patronage, but were also capable of articulating political and ideological commitment to the very thesis of “civilization” that disqualified the majority of their (and the world’s people) from recognition as inherently self-determining, rational, rightfully autonomous beings” (Rodriguez, “Not Classifiable” 153).

Taguba puts himself in this category of those formerly colonized and presently militarized who trumpet U.S. imperialism against his own people and all those others who desire freedom in terms not defined by the U.S. For an activist-scholar eager to find other anti-imperialist Filipin@s from Hawai‘i, this was still a sobering realization.

Double Exposure and Hawai‘i as “Soldier Making Factory”

Another student recruited to fight in this unjust war.

Fort Shafter treats Farrington as a hotbed for recruits.

Enticing them with much needed funds to pay for computers, maintenance repairs and supplies.

In return to have more students enlist.

My school is NOT a soldier-making factory!”

— Nicki Sahagun Garces, Kalihi-based activist-poet

Since September 11, we've had the largest military expansion since World War II. The military seized about 25,000 acres of land in order to station their Stryker brigade in Hawai'i. And these troops are being trained to deploy to Afghanistan and Iraq. So we have this dual role in Hawai'i of being a victim of the American empire and also an accomplice in the building of that empire. And so, we're addressing both problems.

— Kyle Kajihiro, Honolulu-based peace activist

Understanding Taguba's context and the tangible stakes of his actions help to make intelligible the contradictions that hundreds of thousands of other militarized subjects like him must contend with in order to challenge the U.S. on its own terms. As the above epigraphs remind us, Hawai'i is a site that the U.S. depends on to provide soldiers for its wars, training ground for its weapons, and ideological support as the only other pre-9/11 site that endured an attack "on U.S. soil." Taguba's story as both subject and traitor of empire illuminates a story of power that is far longer and more entrenched than what occurred at Abu Ghraib alone. His background and career – born in Asia, raised in the Pacific, deployed in the Middle East – traces a trajectory familiar to many who understand the global scope of U.S. imperialism. I see my task as similar to Kathy Ferguson and Phyllis Turnbull, who explained in *Oh Say Can You See? The Semiotics of the Military in Hawai'i*: "Our goal is not to criticize or condemn the individuals who are or have been in the military, but to call attention to the devastating discursive and institutional consequences of militarized ways of being in the world. Our concern, ultimately, is with the constrictions that militarization places on democratic citizenship" (xvii). Indeed it is with unexceptional irony that many working class, colonized/racialized people – especially in Hawai'i – find they have little decent chance at education, housing or employment without

joining the military of the very country that subjugated their people in the first place. What is remarkable, perhaps even inspiring, is when those same individuals call out their fellow soldiers and the president himself and survive to tell the tale.

The Philippines and Hawai‘i have been shaped by over 100 years of military presence and cultural hegemony by a foreign power. The U.S. war in the Philippines is the most obvious example of U.S. military conquest, but it is by no means the only proof of it. Militarism is normalized in all aspects of civil society from the schools, the churches and the press. In *Securing Paradise: Militarism and Tourism in Hawai‘i and the Philippines*, Vernadette Gonzalez discusses how the violence of militarism is rendered innocent through tourism. With a diverse archive that includes at fiction, highways, helicopter tours, and jungle training camps, she makes visible the extraordinary labor need to naturalize U.S. military in both nations. The Philippines and Hawai‘i are the sites of the U.S.’s oldest military installations in Asia and the Pacific, which Gonzalez describes as and the “linchpins of domination” in the region (4). When subjects like Taguba sing empire’s praises with such warmth and sincerity, Gonzalez cautions that we must see these “regimes of feelings not as examples of false consciousness but as essential elements of a garrison state” (3). It is not unusual to find “the appeal of pleasure, love, and identification in contrast to and in collaboration with pain, hate, and alienation” (3). For militarized subjects, holding these contradictions of love and hate, or democracy and imperialism, is always a complex balancing act. Taguba’s actions prompt us to pay attention – indeed to celebrate – when things are off balance, when the colonial tutelage backfires, letting all of empire’s crimes come into view.

Conclusion

“Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness – and our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we’re being brainwashed to believe.” — Arundhati Roy

In this chapter I have attempted to read the Taguba report – the text, its circulation, and the man who created it – with attention to the legacy of 1898, the post 9/11 iteration of imperialism, and the intersection between the two. As I have shown, if we trumpet Taguba’s actions as another blow against empire, we do so without his consent. We must conclude that while Taguba may have shamed empire, he has no interest in laying siege to it. Nonetheless, his work is a testament to what it means to speak truth to power, and expose empire’s grossest atrocities. While he may not take credit for doing so, his work has given one more tool for thinking people along a wide political spectrum, from anti-imperialist, pro-sovereignty activists in Hawai‘i to anti-torture military generals who extol the merits of “democracy at gunpoint.”

For those interested in Filipin@s in Hawai‘i and mounting more vibrant political critique of U.S. imperialism, the Taguba report provides an endless riddle of contradictions. On one hand, it is a miracle that the report was written, released and had the impact that it did. On the other, the fact that U.S. torture continues is a reminder that the White House remains above the law in terms of prosecution. The Obama Administration failed to bring charges against anyone despite the incriminating 2014 Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report on CIA torture that confirmed that the CIA was using brutal forms of torture against innocent people and consistently lied to Congress about it. The report also revealed that information produced through torture was of little to no value (Ashkenas et al.). Not only did Obama refuse to stop

torture or prosecute any high officials, he has ordered the Senate report classified for another twelve years after he leaves office. Senator Diane Feinstein, who chaired the committee and oversaw the 2014 report, said “We can’t erase our mistakes by destroying the history books... While this report isn’t easy to read, it offers a vital lesson on what happens when we ignore our values” (“Declassify the Senate Torture Report”). Thus while even Democrats debate whether the U.S. should confront its widespread use of torture, it seems likely that it will continue with impunity, but perhaps now without the same eagerness to photograph the evidence.

Taguba’s actions open up new possibilities of Filipin@ American political solidarity. While there is nothing wrong with advancing the rights and benefits due to our own beleaguered community, Taguba does this work while also extending concern and compassion for those outside of it, even those considered America’s enemies. He admonished the Bush and Obama administrations for their torture and war crimes, and made comparisons between the military and the mafia. While it is true that he had no choice about whether to write the 2004 report on Abu Ghraib, everything he has written after that has been of his own volition and much more damning of U.S. torture policy. In short, Taguba has taught Filipin@ Americans something about integrity, even when that runs counter to patriotic mandates of race and religion. For Taguba, it’s not just about succeeding in the system, but asserting moral authority over America’s war criminals, even if they’re in the White House, even if that means the end of one’s career. I venture to guess that no other Filipin@ from Hawai‘i has had his level of influence over American military or foreign policy. For all these reasons, his actions must be seen as highly relevant for those interested in the legacy of anti-imperialist Filipin@ American dissent.

Notes

¹ For more on U.S. education and colonial propaganda, see Reynaldo Clemenaleto's "Philippine Wars and the Politics of Memory," Renato Constantino's "The Miseducation of the Filipino," and Haunani Kay Trask's *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i* and Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua's *Seeds We Planted: Portraits of Native Hawaiian Charter School*.

² For more on the water cure see Paul Kramer's "The Water Cure: Debating torture and counterinsurgency—a century ago." For more on the specifics of U.S. war crimes in Bohol specifically, see Norman Cameron's: "The U.S. Military Occupation of Bohol 1900-1902."

³ For more analysis on the connection between Philippine-American war photography and Abu Ghraib, see Nerissa Balce's *Body Parts of Empire: Visual Abjection, Filipino Images, and the American Archive*.

CHAPTER 4

GRIEF INTO ACTION:

DIASPORIC FILIPINAS IN HAWAI‘I AND THE POLITICAL POTENTIAL OF ELEGY

We have entered a time of extended mourning.

— Grace Caligtan Alvaro, speech at 2014 Decolonial Pin@ys vigil to honor the life of Jennifer Laude

We’ve learned from movements around the world that mourning and remembering the dead can be a form of militant protest. A global politics of anti-imperialism must also call on grief and mourning for the uncounted dead and the unrepresented suffering at the hands of the American Empire.

— Arundhati Roy, *An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire*

How do we begin to tell the story our mourning: those in our immediate family, our diasporic family, and our activist family? I begin this chapter with an epigraph by Grace Caligtan, with whom, in 2013, I along with several others, co-founded Decolonial Pin@ys (DPs), a Honolulu-based group of Filipin@s that supports demilitarization and de-occupation in the Philippines and Hawai‘i. DPs sponsored a vigil in November 2014 to honor the life of Jennifer Laude, a 28-year-old transwoman viciously murdered in Olongapo, Philippines by U.S. Marine Joseph Pemberton the previous month. Caligtan spoke of “extended mourning” because during this same week, a not-guilty verdict was issued in the 2014 trial of Christopher Deedy, the drunk federal agent with the State Department’s Diplomatic Security unit who killed Kollin Elderts, an unarmed Kanaka Maoli 23-year-old in Waikīkī during the 2011 Asia Pacific Economic

Cooperation conference. Mourning was due also for the siege of Gaza that summer of 2014, when the U.S.-supported Israeli military murdered over 2000 Palestinians, 500 of whom were children. Also that summer, U.S. police murdered unarmed African Americans Michael Brown and Eric Garner; by year's end African American men murdered by police would number 1,146 (Swaine et al). The sense of despair was palpable; as Roy's epigraph states above, grief and mourning had become necessary forms of protest against U.S. empire. As settlers in occupied Hawai'i and U.S. citizens, DPs had plenty to consider that year with regard to our kuleana (responsibility, rights, authority) in addressing these multiple challenges.

Yet even in the midst of that bleak time, activists were building powerful movements for solidarity and healing. That same day, the now-closed Revolution Books held a launch event for *A Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land and Sovereignty*, a groundbreaking anthology of essays by contemporary Kanaka Maoli activist/protectors discussing different aspects of nation building. Many supporters of Hawaiian sovereignty from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa were present, as well as seasoned activists of different generations. I was extremely privileged to be one of three women asked by the editors to speak about contemporary issues of local/global militarization; I focused my remarks on Laude and Elderts, whose deaths I argued must be seen as state-sponsored political killings resulting from over 100 years of U.S. occupation in the Philippines and Hawai'i. At the vigil for Laude that followed, many of the same Hawaiian sovereignty supporters stayed for our vigil to listen to Kānaka Maoli māhūwahine who shared how, like Laude, they too had had to fight for their lives at the hands of police, johns and other transphobic criminals.¹ Laude's murder had inspired a number of vigils throughout the Philippine diaspora and among LGBT communities. Those in attendance were pleased to have the opportunity to discuss more deeply our right to self-determination in all

respects, over our sacred bodies and our sacred islands. In other good news that same year, the Hawai‘i Coalition for Justice in Palestine formed, organizing weeks of dynamic protests including one targeting Secretary of State John Kerry. Also promising was that December, Honolulu hosted a “die-in” demonstration where protestors lay on the ground as if dead to express solidarity with Ferguson. This was a rare opportunity in Hawai‘i where there is comparatively limited organizing around justice for African Americans and other victims of police violence. Activists were organizing, educating, and building resistance communities. Often poets were there as well, helping mourners to feel these events with new insight rather than retreat into numbness and fear.

In this chapter, I chart the artistic and political significance of three elegiac poems written by three contemporary diasporic Filipinas in Hawai‘i. I argue their poems are not just mourning the dead, but, to use Neferti Tadiar’s term, articulate a form of “radical bereavement” meant to rouse the living into fighting for justice (Tadiar, *Things Fall Away* 366). I examine how in the poems of Darlene Rodrigues, Malia Derden and Reyna Ramolette Hayashi, death becomes a catalyst for the deep political commitment necessary for new futures to be enacted. Their poems honor, respectively, the death of a loved one fighting in Iraq (Myla Maravillosa), a transwoman murdered by a U.S. marine (Jennifer Laude) and a *kasama* (comrade) (Dionel Campos) tortured and massacred by U.S. -trained paramilitary troops in the Philippines. While Rodrigues reminds us of the impact of endless war, Derden reminds us of the impact of militarized peace, Ramolette reminds us of this third aspect of neoliberal, militarist agenda: supporting multinational corporate agendas of Western-style development and Indigenous land theft. I argue that while death – especially death via state-sponsored murder – can provide a devastating derailing of one’s political courage, these poems demonstrate that the attendant grief can also provide a profound

clarity for why political conditions must urgently be changed and how. These poems and poets offer visions of new political possibility for Filipin@s in Hawai‘i, how we’re perceived, and how our energies might best be spent. In their “radical bereavement,” these elegists are re-visioning genuine security and genuine sovereignty for the Philippines, Hawai‘i, and beyond.

Poems to Our Dead: A Complicated Legacy

Rodrigues, Derden and Ramolete’s use of elegy can be positioned in multiple traditions and genealogies simultaneously. Simply put, elegies are defined as songs or poems of lamentation.² All three poets write primarily in English, so in this regard they might be included in the Euro-American tradition that dates back to Greek antiquity. In its most stylized form, elegies mark three stages of loss: “First, there is a lament, where the speaker expresses grief and sorrow, then praise and admiration of the idealized dead, and finally consolation and solace” (“Elegy: Poetic Form”). Among contemporary elegists, structure is not a defining characteristic, and elegies do not necessarily end in consolation as they have in the past. Many critics contend contemporary elegy itself is actually a slippery genre to define. In the 2010 *Oxford Handbook of the Elegy*, Karen Weisman admits: “There is little scholarly consensus about what constitutes an elegy, or how to distinguish between elegy and the broader category of elegiac literature” (2). Nonetheless she maintains it is elegy’s complexity makes it so compelling as a genre: “More than any other literary kind, elegy pushes against the limits of our expressive resources precisely at the very moment in which we confront our mortality, which is as much to say that it throws into relief the inefficacy of language precisely when we need it most” (1). Other scholars in that volume speak of the “creative potential of loss” (4) and the potential of elegy to address the political context of death, especially through war, cancer and AIDS. My chapter focuses on

elegy's potential for political clarity; when a loved one dies there is an urgent need to speak out against the injustice that led to that death and those many others still at risk.

These elegies can also be placed in a genealogy with literatures of war because all three focus on individuals who died through war and/or military occupation. As women writing on such topics, there are gendered dimensions of political and literary expression that must be carefully considered; too often, women's grief over war and the war dead is trivialized and depoliticized. Susan Schweik writes:

[R]eading war poetry as we have so often been taught to read it-as a register of difference between and within men over the affairs of manhood, in which, say, the euphemisms of generals are broken open by the literalizing story of the soldier-we may once again be complicit in rendering women (who have also, always, had our say about war) silent and invisible and static, suppressing our own dynamic and complex relations to systems of warmaking. (554)

In other words, Western war poetry and criticism often exclude or belittle women and nonsoldier's experiences of war. For diasporic Filipina poets in Hawai'i, like other women of color writers, such marginalization is compounded. Perhaps unsurprisingly, both the *Oxford Handbook of the Elegy* and the 2014 *New Oxford Book of War Poetry* contain no mention of Filipin@s from any country either as poets or subjects of the poems. In this regard, their inclusion in this genealogy of the literatures of war may seem untenable or even undesirable. As Filipinas in Hawai'i may be of little interest to the Euro-American literary establishment, those they mourn are similarly marginalized: the Filipina American soldier in Iraq, the Filipina transwoman sex worker outside the U.S. base, and the Indigenous educator in war-torn Mindanao. In lamenting the death of these individuals, these poets shed critical light on today's

most pressing issues: the global wars on terror, militarism's impact on (trans)gender oppression, and the role of militarism in promoting Western mining interests. As Carole Stone writes in "Elegy as Political Expression in Women's Poetry": "They have invented elegiac conventions permitting them to write in a female voice that expresses both private and collective grief. In their hands elegy becomes a form that at once witnesses history and tries to change it" (90). Indeed because these women all identify as activist poets, I pay equal attention to their work both on and off the page.

Considering all these poets claim Filipin@ heritage, there are also cultural traditions within which to situate these poems' genealogies. For example, within Filipin@ Catholicism, there is the *novena*, daily prayer gatherings of mourning, usually women-led, in the nine days following a death. Similarly, Rodrigues' activism with Women's Voices, Women Speak can be understood as a forum for women to mourn the losses due to war and militarization. Rodrigues' cousin, the subject of her elegy, was aspiring to be a nun but joined the military to pay for her education. Whether the novena or any woman-led activity is feminist or just feminine is worthy of debate, but many would agree the rosary's repeatedly chanting "Holy Mary Mother of God" provides a powerful honoring of the sacred feminine within an otherwise patriarchal tradition.³ Filipina ethnomusicologist Grace Nono has written on the songs for the dead in the pre-Spanish tradition of the *babaylan* that continues to this day. These women spiritual leaders guide communities through their grieving processes and hold power that is still considered a threat to the church's male authority. In an interview Nono explained, "The babaylan's voice [is] a site for the gathering of voices – spirit, babaylan, human – in the ongoing performance of human-spirit relationships, the state of which affects health, illness and healing" (Mayuga). An earlier iteration of Decolonial Pin@ys was called "Urban Babaylan," and Rodrigues' poem refers to them: "And

Auntie TK speaking out about her love of Ka Pae ‘Āina (the Hawaiian archipelago)/ Embracing babaylan and holding us in sisterhood.” Here Rodrigues is referring to the decolonial alliance between Kanaka Maoli and Filipina women that formed Women’s Voices, Women Speak. In her poem “Life is a Prayer,” Ramolete addresses the deceased as “*Manong*” (Ilokano for older brother), recalling the Ilokano tradition of the *dung-aw* or song of the soul, which is also often conducted by women at funerals.⁴ Narita Gonzalez’ 2013 “Dung-aw at the Wailing Wall,” offers an English-language tribute to her deceased husband, celebrated Filipino poet and novelist N.V.M. Gonzalez.⁵ In short, there are a variety of mourning traditions among diasporic Filipina poets and the political potential of that mourning should not be underestimated.

No discussion of the political potential of diasporic Filipina poetry would be complete without mention of Neferti X. M. Tadiar’s trenchant analysis of Tagalog poetry. In *Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Makings of Globalization*, she writes: “I do not look to literature for typicality or representable realities; I look to it rather for creative possibility” (17). Tadiar’s optimistic view of literature’s role is remarkable considering her unflinching analysis of global capitalism and the role of Filipin@ labor within it. She theorizes the invisibility/hypervisibility of Filipin@ overseas contract workers, most of whom are women, who serve as constant reminders of *both* the state of economic crisis and the potential that still remains for global revolution. She takes aim at both the postcolonial Philippine state and revolutionary movements that have left the global poor (“the surplus people”) with a sense of failure and futility (374). She writes: “I want to call attention to this feeling of a certain disastrous historical conclusion about national liberation movements having been reached, and more, to suggest that this general feeling helps to shape the very world it is ostensibly about” (334). In other words, activists and poets have an important role in coloring our view of what is

politically possible. Tadiar insists we pay attention to the “rituals of radicalized grief” of ordinary people who, unlike their bourgeois counterparts, have nothing left to lose (15). Within such realms can be traced “radical political potentials for unfinished imaginations of revolution in the present” (378). As I will show, Rodrigues, Derden and Ramolete focus on elegy to mourn specific individuals – the Filipina American soldier, the transgender sex worker, the rural educator – and in doing so make structural commentary on what led to those deaths, demonstrating a shared optimism in literature’s potential to chart new futures.

As all these writers are born and raised in Hawai‘i, it is not far fetched to consider also the influence of ‘Ōiwi literary and funerary traditions in their writing. One Hawaiian literary form, the kanikau, or Hawaiian mourning chant, also deserves mention here. Marie Alohalani Brown offers an extended discussion on the historical evolution of the kanikau in her review of Keala Kelly’s celebrated 2010 documentary *Noho Hewa*. While most know of the kanikau as a composition to honor the dead, they were also used to honor the living, a year that just passed, or even *the land itself*. Referring to a powerful scene in the documentary, Brown writes: “these chanters are praying for the recovery of Mākua Valley after an army munitions burn raged out of control and ‘engulfed half the valley, sacred sites and endangered species habitats.’ In this case, the kanikau not only laments the damage caused to Mākua but also works to repair it” (381).⁶ The composer of a kanikau might also be understood as issuing a kāhea (call to action) (375). Of course it would be inappropriate to refer to these elegies as proper kanikau because the poets are not Kānaka Maoli and the poems are written primarily in English. However, all three elegies do “lament the damage” to the land resulting from war, occupation and mining, and they all challenge the listener to take action.

Put together, these traditions – Euro-American elegy, women’s anti-war literature, women-led Filipin@ mourning rituals, revolutionary diasporic Filipin@ poetry, and Hawaiian kanikau – provide the intellectual and cultural contexts to properly situate these poems. In terms of these poets’ political orientation, it is also important to note that all three express commitment in their poems to both a decolonized Hawai‘i and a decolonized Philippines. For Rodrigues, Derden and Ramolete, Hawai‘i is referred to as “America” and the Philippines is not considered free of America despite 60+ years of formal independence. These writers have no interest in affirming America’s presence in Hawai‘i, or “demanding respect” in American-style bourgeois multiculturalism.⁷ Their poems defy any apolitical, nostalgic portrayals of “the homeland” or the plantation era of Hawai‘i. Through their poems and their activism, these poets demonstrate a deep commitment to political futures beyond the militarized neoliberal agenda at work in both locations today. In big and small ways, they build a culture of solidarity that takes seriously Kanaka Maoli concerns, while highlighting the anticolonial resistance of the Philippines to strengthen the movements to build a truly free and independent Hawai‘i.

Genuine Security, Genuine Sovereignty

There are numerous engines of death that women’s war poetry might eulogize, but perhaps none is as obvious as militarization, which has increased significantly in Hawai‘i and the Philippines post 9/11, and threatens to increase further under Obama’s “Pacific Pivot” or “Pivot to Asia.” U.S. military spending has increased 50% since 9/11, not including spending for the Department of Homeland Security.⁸ For Hawai‘i, this has meant the largest U.S military build up since Pearl Harbor with 113 military installations, occupying 230,532 acres.⁹ Hawai‘i is also the home of the U.S. Pacific Command, which directs the military operations throughout the “Indo-

Asia-Pacific” region. The attacks on 9/11 have also provided the context for re-militarization of the Philippines. Joint training exercises in the Philippines continue through the “wars on terror,” compromising Filipin@ sovereignty and further marginalizing Muslims in the Philippines. Every other year in Hawai‘i, the U.S. occupation is magnified during the RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific) exercises, a month-long series of war games featuring 24 countries, billion-dollar weapons systems and the largest series of maritime training exercises in the world. U.S. soldiers from Guåhan, Hawai‘i, Sāmoa and Micronesia are grossly overrepresented by 249% and die at a rate of 36 per million compared to the national average of 5 per million.¹⁰ Little is taught in the U.S. schools about the Middle East, so many Hawai‘i-based soldiers have little exposure to the value of the region’s histories, cultures and religions. Instead they are taught the necessity of war and occupation in order to protect the U.S. version of “national security.”

Demilitarization movements led by women call for a shift in common understanding of the term “security.” Women’s Voices, Women Speak is a Honolulu-based group that was founded in 2004 by Kanaka Maoli and Filipina women in Hawai‘i to educate the public on the links between militarization in the Philippines and Hawai‘i. A key tenet of their platform is to advance the conversation for *genuine* security. Rather than investing in an elusive “national security” that often means an agenda of war and weapons spending no matter the cost, or “regional security” that often means militarization and liberalization of “free” trade routes,¹¹ WVWS argues that in order to feel secure, people need to have their basic needs met including but not limited to food, water, health care, education, and housing. Their vision for genuine security includes Hawaiian sovereignty, and they emphasize the importance of *genuine* sovereignty, which must include demilitarization. Their four genuine security principles draw on the United Nations Development Program report of 1994: “(1) the physical environment must be

able to sustain human and natural life; (2) people's basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, health care, and education must be guaranteed; (3) people's fundamental human dignity should be honored and cultural identities respected; and (4) people and the natural environment should be protected from avoidable harm." Rather than a one-dimensional "no war!" agenda, WVWS advocates for substantive conversion of our militarized economies to support a life of peace and dignity for everyone.

Darlene Rodrigues is a poet and essayist who has been working for many years to promote an agenda of genuine security in Hawai'i and the Philippines. She is a longtime demilitarization activist born and raised in Mililani, O'ahu. Her parentage is Visayan on both sides, with a Bohol-born mother, and a Hawai'i-born father who was adopted by a Portuguese family. Rodrigues has worked for over 20 years in a number of social justice organizations including American Friends Service Committee, Hawai'i People's Fund, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), the CHOW Project needle exchange program, and the Hawai'i-based Pilipina Rural Project, which raises awareness about domestic violence among Hawai'i-based Filipinas. She was also a prominent critic of degrading representations of Filipin@s in local literature, and the real-life consequences of this ongoing stereotyping for Hawai'i's Filipin@s.¹² In a 2016 talk at my Literature of Hawai'i class at UH Mānoa, Rodrigues stated plainly her perspective on the connection between literature and social change: "All literature is political, and don't let anyone tell you differently" (Rodrigues, "Lecture"). She explained that the political context we are in determines who gets published, who gets read, and whose voices are taken seriously. Rodrigues' conviction is evident in her poetry, which has been her preferred genre for speaking out against injustice in Hawai'i, the Philippines, and elsewhere.

Like many demilitarization activists, Rodrigues has family in the military and had to learn from experience how *insecure* families become when they lose loved ones to this “national security” agenda. On Christmas Eve 2005, Rodrigues received devastating news that her Army-enlisted cousin Myla Maravillosa was killed by a rocket propelled grenade (RPG) only one month into her tour in Iraq. Maravillosa was from a working-class immigrant family in Wahiawā, a town thoroughly entrenched by the military in its schools and economy.¹³ She hoped the military would be the path to go to college and make her dreams come true. Maravillosa was the only child of her widowed mother Estelita Maravillosa, so this loss was tragic to the family on multiple levels. Adding to the shock of her death was the news in June of that same year that Saddam Hussein in fact had no weapons of mass destruction as the Bush administration claimed. Like other families that had buried their children, Maravillosa’s family would come to realize that they had been lied to and their loved one paid with her life for that lie.

Rodrigues wrote two sister poems eulogizing Maravillosa, “4 Years and 1 Anniversary Are Enough for Me” and “The Meaning of Peace,” that capture this poetics of “grief into action” (30-34). In the first poem, her hard-hitting prose expresses the fury of a grieving family tired of being manipulated into supporting empire’s wars: “Fuck you / step back / Keep your pack of lies and dirty tricks.” Repeated use of heavy consonants especially words that end in K punctuate these lines with extra ferocity. Like a warrior for peace, Rodrigues uses her poems to protect her family from further insult. She directs her rage at Bush and other “national security” propagandists who shove “blind patriotism ... down our grieving throats” and she demands an end to “the doublespeak of greed propped as foreign policy,” in other words the corporations that employ war for capitalist gain. Rodrigues also laments “occupation feigning as humanitarian aid” to expose the Bush era trope of rescuing Iraqi women from their oppression in Islam as the

benevolent purpose of the war. While her poems are heavy with anger and grief, the cadence slows to a quiet tribute to her cousin and the endless contradictions that shaped her short life.

Rodrigues writes:

I am proud of her regardless of the circumstances of her death

I am proud because she was someone who cared about the poor

Who worried about the Iraqi children and the world that they lived in

I am proud because she kept her honor by always keeping true to her word

I am proud because she wouldn't have used her own death as a reason to oppress
another human

I am proud because she knew of the conflict between holding the bible in one
hand and a gun in the other (32)

Maravillosa had planned on becoming a nun or a diplomat so when Rodrigues writes “the conflict between holding the bible in one hand and a gun in the other” she refers to her cousin’s internal struggle with how still stay true to her values. While patriotic elegies focus on U.S. deaths and sanctioned narratives of loyal soldiers who died bravely, here Rodrigues explores taboo subjects like Maravillosa’s conflict over joining the military in the first place, as well as grief over the harm she was inflicting as she was “worried about the Iraqi children.” While the military and the media trumpet U.S. soldier deaths as proof of the wars’ legitimacy, Rodrigues insists that Maravillosa’s death not be used to perpetuate more wars that have proven only to keep people less secure and less safe. What emerges is an ethics that insists on counting the dead on *both* sides of the gun: “our country should not occupy anywhere.” Rodrigues’ reference to “anniversaries” serves as a reminder that this prospect of endless war means endless death and endless grieving: “We cannot erase the anniversaries of other families who’ve lost someone / But

I love you enough to tell you no more / We need to stop making these anniversaries” (32). While she demands that leaders take heed, she stops short of giving into hate, even with regard to George Bush who led the U.S. in to the war that ended her cousin’s life. In fact she repeats the phrase “I love you enough to tell you” six times as she addresses Bush directly. In doing so, she points to the struggle to remain grounded in one’s spiritual principles given the unjust actions of others. Like other nonviolent traditions like kapu aloha (“discipline of compassion”) and *satyagraha*, Rodrigues reminds us that if all life is sacred, then even the lives of racist warmongers are sacred too.¹⁴

Rodrigues’ commitment to genuine security includes a focus on women’s liberation as well. Her two poems “4 Years and 1 Anniversary Are Enough for Me” and “The Meaning of Peace” were published in a 2007 collection of Hawai‘i women’s poetry called *Ho‘omo‘omo‘o: Piecing Together Expressions of Resistance*, which Rodrigues co-edited with ‘Ōiwi poet and demilitarization activist Summer Kaimalia Mullins-Ibrahim (née Nemeth) as a project of Women’s Voices, Women Speak. WVWS brought a copy of the collection as ho‘okupu (offering) for each delegate attending the bi-annual gathering of the International Network of Women Against Militarism in the San Francisco Bay Area. The organization provides a forum for women to build international solidarity to end U.S. military violence in Guahan, Korea, Okinawa, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Hawai‘i and the U.S. continent. In launching the *Ho‘omo‘omo‘o* project, Nemeth and Rodrigues organized education and writing workshops to encourage contributors to learn about the multiple sites on O‘ahu that have been desecrated by the military, as well as to explore their own personal and often contradictory relationship to militarization.¹⁵ While many poets cry at the injustice done to the land by the military, other poets speak to the helplessness when one’s family or students join that same military.

Rodrigues and Nemeth position the work of these poets in a Pacific context of women as sacred protectors of the land. The term “ho‘omo‘omo‘o” references the first beating in the kapa / tapa (Pacific bark cloth) making process, a collective task traditionally done by women. The collection itself was bound with paper hand made by the poets themselves. Nemeth and Rodrigues write in the introduction:

There is a lot of kaona (layered meaning) in the title ho‘omo‘omo‘o as it encompasses the word mo‘omo‘o, the name for the bundles of fibers that stick together. Like these fibers, the individual voices in this collection will be pieced together to make a stronger statement against the militarization of our homeland. The title can also be connected to the mo‘o, protectors of sacred bodies of water, who were identified throughout Hawai‘i in both ‘oli (chant) and mo‘olelo (stories, histories). These mo‘o were usually identified as being women, and were revered by the people of Hawai‘i. Like these mo‘o who protected our sacred sites in the past, the voices of women collected in this book are meant to expose the impacts of militarization on our communities, and to protect our ‘āina from further militarization.

As seen in this passage, women’s life experiences, Indigenous values, and sacred connection to land remain central to WVWS’s vision. The vision of fibers bound together is fitting for a group so dedicated to cross cultural alliances within Hawai‘i as well as transnational solidarity across Moana Nui (“vast ocean”) and beyond. The collection’s handmade cover adds another layer of kaona: taking old bits of paper like junk mail and repurposing them to make something beautiful is similar to the goal of demilitarization; the “junk” of militarized lands and economies must be repurposed to make beautiful futures for generations to come.

Rodrigues's critique of "national security" is not only at the United States. In her second poem, "The Meaning of Peace," Rodrigues further reflects on how other nations are also promoting this version of "security":

True security happens
When anak of the bayan
Balikbayan their ancestral souls
Carry signs and tell you GMA to get out...

True security happens at Makahiki at Mōkapu
And Auntie TK speaking out about her love of Ka Pae 'Āina
Embracing babaylan and holding us in sisterhood

In this passage, Rodrigues points to former President and convicted felon Gloria Macapagal Arroyo ("GMA") for her own role in opening up the Philippines to further U.S. militarization, and calls for *balikbayan* (Filipin@s in diaspora) to hold her accountable for this disgrace. Importantly, she refers to Mōkapu, the site where 2000 sets of 'Ōiwi ancestral remains were cemented over by the Marine Corps Base on the Windward side of O'ahu. Holding Makahiki (celebration of abundance/season of peace) allows for Kānaka 'Ōiwi like veteran demilitarization activist Terri Keko'olani ("Aunty Terri" or "Aunty TK") to honor these iwi kupuna (ancestral remains) and reclaim the land for a pono (just) purpose, if only temporarily.¹⁶ Aunty Terri was one of the original founders of WVWS, and including her in this poem is a statement about Filipina-'Ōiwi solidarities. Images like "anak of the bayan" (children of the land) and "holding us in sisterhood" emphasize the familial relationship that is forged when people care for land and

each other properly. Put differently, when we rise up (“carry signs and tell you GMA to get out”) we can protect all that what we love.

Rodrigues’ vision of genuine security is focused not only on the oppression of Filipin@s and Hawaiians fighting their common enemy, but of the Okinawans’ fight against militarism as well:

True security happens
When fishermen and women who have harvested
The sea in Henoko
Surround the imperial tools of destruction
And say no more
3,000 miles away we surround the Japanese Consulate
and tie red ribbons
the blood of the sea
the blood of solidarity (33)

Henoko is the site of a powerful resistance movement organizing against both the U.S. and the Japanese governments to protect their community from the proposed relocation of U.S. Marine Corps’ Futenma Air Station. The Okinawan demilitarization movement has grown in strength and visibility, forcing the U.S. military to respond. Unfortunately, rather reducing the size of its military, the U.S. announced its plans to relocate over 5000 troops to Guåhan (Fuentes). This is why an “all our islands are sacred” framework has become the rallying cry for many throughout Oceania. This passage from Rodrigues poem puts the needs of fishermen and women at the center as they are ones who will not only lose jobs, but also lose their livelihood and connection to their ancestors’ way of life. In order to harvest, that sea must be healthy, but that cannot

happen with continued military contamination. The red ribbons provide multiple kaona (hidden meaning). The ribbons were used in a WVWS action to protest the crimes of the Japanese government against the Okinawans, but they also commemorate Queen Lili‘uokalani’s act of protest against the U.S. in 1897.¹⁷ Rodrigues takes aim at the United States, Japan and the Philippines for their culpability in this transnational agenda of war and destruction.

With the ending stanza Rodrigues argues it is not enough to name the problem that we must resist (empire), we must commit to the solution too: a *genuinely secure future* that must be built to replace it. The grief and misery of militarization can consume us, Rodrigues ends “The Meaning of Peace” with further images of the concrete actions we can take to enact the futures worth fighting for: “True security is Kyle giving me / Worms to start my own bin” (34).

Rodrigues salutes another one of Hawai‘i’s most prominent demilitarization activists, Kyle Kajihiro. His giving her worms is “true security” because composting is necessary to restore soil health and produce healthy food for lāhui (the nation). Because 90% of Hawai‘i’s food is imported, food security has become a hugely important facet of Hawaiian sovereignty efforts, so genuine security must include food security. Composting is also an apt metaphor for activism itself. As the soil is enriched, so are the people. Rodrigues writes: “Learning to transform our waste back to / Nourishment for the āina” (34). As we harvest healthier food, we harvest healthier generations. As more generations learn to mālama ‘āina (care for the land), they will not tolerate jobs that demand desecration of the land.

As Audre Lorde said, “poetry is a litany of survival.” Rodrigues’s poems provide a pedagogy of that survival in the aftermath of the death of a loved one who died for an unjust cause. Rather than letting grief immobilize her, Rodrigues turns to poetry to strengthen her politics of peace. Her actions are motivated by a deep spiritual commitment to let love prevail,

even against one's enemies. This is extraordinary considering the enormity of problem: the endlessness of war means an endless well of grief for her family and many others. As she eulogizes her cousin, Rodrigues does not focus only on the impacts of her death on her family; she talks about the full political context of Maravillosa's death and the web of lies that led to it. Rodrigues is not just concerned with the impact of the U.S. military on soldiers, but on Iraqis too, and any other peoples under military occupation. She is willing to fight for more than genuine security and genuine sovereignty of Filipin@s; she fights for Hawaiians and Okinawans too. She does not just call for an end to U.S. militarism, but to the criminal militarisms of Japan, the Philippines, and other militarized nation states. Her politics are marked by a deep awareness of the interconnectedness of these struggles, as well as the role of honoring our dead in the right way to build truly just futures for everyone. Rodrigues transforms her grief by planting a garden, tying ribbons around a consulate, and transforming junk mail into homemade paper gifts of poetry, all acts done in community with others to plant the seeds of resistance across oceans and generations.

Our Islands are Sacred, Our Bodies are Sacred

If elegy is a form that has uniquely feminist potential, what about those outside the gender binary who are also targets of misogyny? In this section, I turn to Malia Derden's poem to Janet Mock and Jennifer Laude in which she makes clear that gender justice is not just about ciswomen. In a truly decolonized Hawai'i and Philippines, all genders must be safe, welcome and free.

Janet Mock is an award-winning journalist and transgender rights advocate. In August 2015, she gave a passionate eulogy on MSNBC to the 17 transwomen that had been killed in the

U.S. that year. In the tradition of Black Lives Matter and the #Sayhername movements, Mock captured brief snapshots of each woman's life: "These women are more than just a compilation of names and ages and stories of violence and trauma. They were people. People living at a vulnerable intersection of race, gender, and class. People existing in a culture where they fell in between the cracks of racial justice, feminist, and LGBT movements. People whose names are only spoken by the majority of us when they can no longer respond" (Brydum). Mock's intersectional analysis is informed by her own experience growing up Hawaiian and African American in Kalihi, a working-class community outside Honolulu. In her best-selling memoir, *Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More*, Mock details her many struggles with family members, school administrators, and police officers who blame transwomen of color for their own marginalization. Mock honors two treasured people who gave her a sense of safety growing up. The first was her childhood best friend Wendy, a transgirl of Filipina heritage, who was pivotal in helping her to come out and live authentically ("The Person Who Gave"). The second was her hula teacher, Kumu Kaua'i, who taught her about the exalted position of māhūwahine in Hawaiian culture and spirituality.

I begin with Janet Mock to provide the context for Malia Derden's "Janet," a poem which centralizes the potential for multiple decolonial alliances: between Filipinas and Kānaka Maoli, between diasporic Filipin@s and those in the Philippines, between cis- and transwomen. As an elegist, Derden might also be seen as drawing connections between those who have been lost and those who remain. Derden is a 20-year-old performance poet whose work draws connections between imperialism and transphobia both in Hawai'i and the Philippines. Born of African American and Visayan heritage, she has already made a name for herself in activist and poetry circles both in Hawai'i and on the continent. She became involved with Youth Speaks Hawai'i as

a teenager, and continues to perform today with Pacific Tongues, YSH's umbrella organization. She currently works at Kōkua Kalihi Valley, a multi-service agency that runs a farm, clinic and café all designed to promote health at both individual and community levels. Derden has won several poetry slam awards including the first place for 2016 Slam of the Pacific, and the second place for the 2015 Slam of the Pacific. In 2016 she was the first poet from Hawai'i to perform at Women of the World Poetry Slam in Brooklyn. In high school, she was the President of Farrington High School's Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), which was awarded the 2013 GSA of the Year Award at the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network's (GLSEN) Respect Award Ceremony in Beverly Hills. Derden's poetry speaks to a number of social justice issues including labor rights for women of color hotel housekeepers, Black/people of color liberation, LGBT liberation, Hawaiian sovereignty and West Papuan independence. Derden's poetry expresses commitment to multiply oppressed people and draws on the best of resistance traditions from the continent, Hawai'i and Oceania.

Like Rodrigues, Derden uses elegy to inspire people to take action, particularly on women's issues. Her poem does not at first seem like an elegy. Instead she begins with a salute to Mock as the kind of woman she wants to be.

Hailing from the slums of O'ahu...

Janet Mock!

Who?!

JANET MOCK!

Transgender rights activist and former staff editor of

People magazine website

She underwent

Sex reassignment surgery

And came out publically as a trans woman

In 2014 her memoir was released

And landed a spot on the *New York Times* best seller list called

Redefining Realness

Why does this matter, you ask?

Janet Mock... is an older version ...of me!! (Derden)

Derden pokes fun at herself, allowing the audience to enjoy her geeky moment of being star struck by this beautiful, successful woman from her hometown. The poem's opening line "slums of O'ahu" reminds her audience that Derden's is a located, class-based politics that forms the basis of her admiration of Mock. The "older version of me" refers to their multiple similarities: they are both "Half-Black," from the same working-class background, and attended the same underfunded school, Farrington High in Kalihi. Derden celebrates Mock's rags to riches story as an inspiration to other girls in the neighborhood struggling with similar barriers to success.

After spending the first half of the poem celebrating a transwoman's very public life, Derden spends the last half eulogizing another transwoman's very public death: "On October 11, 2014 in Olongapo, Philippines / Jennifer Laude's head was leaning on the rim of a toilet bowl / She was found dead." With this abrupt switch in tone, Derden names Laude's killer, Joseph Scott Pemberton, the U.S. Marine who met Laude in a bar, then went to a hotel with her where he ended her life only thirty minutes later. When the hotel staff found her body, her neck showed traumatic injuries and her head was "slumped in the toilet bowl" (Placido). Forensics experts disagree on whether the cause of death was due to strangulation or drowning (Gualvez). Pemberton claimed in the trial that he did not know Laude was transgender until they had sex,

thus employing the much-decried “panic defense,” or what I refer to as a transmisogynistic “honor killing.”¹⁸ Laude was a 27-year-old woman who media refer to simply as a transgender sex worker with few other details. However, much has been written about her death and the ongoing travesty of the Visiting Forces Agreement that allows the U.S. to continue its military operations in the Philippines. Luckily Pemberton was tried in the Philippines, a first for U.S. military personnel. However, the Philippine court ruled that Pemberton was only guilty of the lesser charge of homicide rather than murder. In effect, the court ruled that he killed Laude with no malicious intent. Even worse, upon appeal, Pemberton’s sentence was reduced from 12 years to only 10. Pemberton’s minimal sentence is a brutal reminder of how U.S. troops compromise Filipin@ sovereignty and the real-life consequences for those who live near the bases.

Pemberton’s choice to kill Laude in a toilet also reminds Filipin@s of their long-standing humiliation under U.S. imperial power. That Pemberton may have killed her through drowning recalls the U.S. propensity to weaponize water to torture and kill (water cure, water boarding, water cannons) even as U.S. corporations deny water rights to sustain life. Laude’s mother Julita has promised to fight for justice, “even if we don’t have money,” a grief-into-action story that has mobilized Filipin@s in several cities, including those in diaspora like Derden (Drury).

Given the inadequacy of the law in bringing justice to transgender people like Jennifer Laude, it is useful to consider how Derden asserts her political vision outside the slam poetry community.¹⁹ While Rodrigues works through activist networks of WVWS, Derden has performed her poetry to eager audiences at events like Nā Hua Ea, literally “Sovereign Words,” a night of poetry and mele (song) in conjunction with Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea, the annual celebration of Hawaiian Sovereignty.²⁰ The cheers from the crowd opened a space for māhū-identified Kaumakaiwa Kanaka‘ole to thank Derden for her poem, which provided her the

safety needed to come out to the sizable crowd, proving once again the power of art to create a sense of “genuine security and genuine sovereignty.” Derden’s performing this poem in that context highlighted importance of linking gender self-determination with Indigenous self-determination.

Through these venues, Derden’s visioning makes connections across several lines of difference. In her fangirl identification with Mock, she refuses the divisions between ciswomen and transwomen. In her discussion of Mock and Laude, she unites the causes of Filipina and Kanaka Maoli transwomen, and the ongoing struggle against occupation in both sites. As a Filipina, her reaching across the diaspora is an act of solidarity to her ancestral homeland. As Rodrigues honors her cousin Myla Maravillosa who died for the U.S. military, Derden honors Jennifer Laude who died at the hands of the U.S. military. The former died in a war, while the latter died as a result of “peacetime” military occupation. If part of the task of the queer and transgender liberation movement is to trouble binaries, then these poems together certainly trouble the binary between war-time and “peacetime.” This is an important reminder for places like Hawai‘i and the Philippines that are technically not war zones, but places where foreign military occupation continues nonetheless, compromising the sovereignty of the land and dignity of the people.

Derden elegy directs political attention to all those murdered by U.S. military like Laude, and those humiliated by U.S. police like Mock. However, rather than focusing only on the obvious violence of militarism, Derden also critiques schools, media and online communities because they contribute to the normalization of transphobia, and thus help shape the public conversation around transgender people’s right to safety. She writes: “Do obituaries ever get lonely / When the nameless don’t show up / Do the headlines know what they are talking about /

Is your ignorance worth a life?” She reminds us of the countless other transfolk of color who did not make the headlines but died under equally horrific circumstances. She criticizes both the ideological apparatuses and young people themselves for normalizing violence against this vulnerable community. With her elegy, she resurrects Laude from her humiliating public death and puts her in a protected circle of love and affection with Janet Mock. Her poem joins the coalitional chorus of demilitarization activists, LGBT activists, and those who support Philippine sovereignty that formed vigils all over the world in her name. Her poem begs us to ask, how many more brilliant journalist-author-advocate role models might there be for us all if we could end transmisogyny?

Embodied Sovereignty and Lumad Struggle

The struggle for the Lumad, or Indigenous peoples of Mindanao, exemplifies how the postcolonial state facilitates extraction from Indigenous land and displacement of Indigenous people. The Philippines has endured many centuries of colonial rule that was supposed to have ended with independence in 1946. However, colonialism continues through the presence of the militarization and corporate mining, and in most cases, Indigenous people suffer the worst in terms of loss of land, abuses and murder. In “Indigenous Communities’ Resistance to Corporate Mining in the Philippines,” Roland G. Simbulan explains that 73 Indigenous Filipin@s have been killed between 2010-2015, 57 of whom are Lumad from Mindanao, in southern Philippines (29).²¹ The Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and the 2004 National Mineral Policy Agenda favor foreign large-scale mining. Although there are powerful movements organizing to strengthen environmental laws, as of April 2015, there are 700 mining permits awaiting approval, the majority of which are in Mindanao (Jennings). Simbulan writes, “[T]he government’s profit-

driven development policy assures that extractive industries are given more priority in Indigenous people's territories than the Indigenous people's rights and welfare, resulting in continuing forced eviction from ancestral lands, loss of livelihood, disintegration of communal ties, and militarization" (36).

This reality poses a needed challenge to "demilitarization activism" that is often focused on withdrawal of U.S. military bases, but undertheorizes the role of domestic paramilitary forces protecting billion dollar extractive industries. In other words, what does "Filipin@ sovereignty" mean from the point of view of Lumad of Southern Philippines, long marginalized by the Tagalog-speaking, Christian-centered, Western-centered government of the North? Is the nation-state itself the problem? In this section, I turn to Reyna Ramolette Hayashi whose elegy and activism on the Lumad struggle engages these important questions in earnest.

Each of the previous poets eulogizes the death of a particular person and in doing so, articulates her vision for post-imperial futures – what might be called "sovereignty." In Rodrigues' conception, the role of a peace, or an end of war and occupation, and healing our relationship with land and food is central. Derden prioritizes gender justice, or an end to (trans)misogyny – and healing the divisions between cis and transwomen. In her poem, "Life Is a Prayer," Ramolette Hayashi is the only of the three elegists to use the word "sovereignty." Her poem articulates a strong affinity between the Hawaiian concept of "ea" which I describe below and the vision of human freedom enacted by the Lumad (Indigenous people) in Han-Ayan, Surigao del Sur, Mindanao. Ramolette's discussion of sovereignty also furthers Rodrigues' discussion on the ways healing our relationship with land will transform our relationship to the sacred. Additionally, like Derden, who eulogizes a person who was suffered a particularly humiliating murder at the hands of a foreign military, Ramolette reflects on the terror intrinsic to

the postcolonial Philippine state's exertion of sovereign power and what that signals for activist priorities.

As I have argued in previous chapters, there are many Kānaka Maoli who, while committed to Hawaiian sovereignty, realize the limitations of this English word and the Western-style assumptions embedded in the Westphalian model.²² In “Kuleana Lāhui: Collective Responsibility for Hawaiian Nationhood in Activists’ Praxis,” Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua explains the controversy among Kānaka Maoli over how and whether to engage with nation-state structures, i.e. federal recognition as Indigenous people of the U.S. or international recognition as an independent nation state. She describes how court battles for recognition by the settler state and international bodies have drained needed mana (sacred power) from lāhui (the people, the nation) resulting in no tangible gains over the last two decades. Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua engages with other scholars of anarcha-indigenism like Richard Day who critique the mainstream “politics of demand” style of activism in which groups compete for rights and attention from the state.²³ Ultimately, she argues, any reification of the state’s authority as the arbiter of rights and freedom renders invisible the settler state’s role in Indigenous land theft. In contrast, ea (which she defines as “sovereignty, life, breath”) is a more culturally specific concept that captures how sovereignty is not defined by a single moment of recognition by the settler state, but through an active practice of becoming through engagement with kuleana (responsibility) to the land and each other. Furthermore, ea is a verb that references an embodied practice, like breathing, that never ends. She writes: “Hawaiian social movement is at its best when, rather than demanding that the land be given back to Hawaiians, it is getting Hawaiians back on the land.” The Hawaiian word for land is ‘āina – that which feeds; Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua emphasizes the role of

food security in strengthening the nation, as well as spiritual grounding that occurs when Indigenous people remain on their ancestral land and cultivate it as they see fit.

Reyna Ramolete Hayashi is an activist-lawyer-poet who has engaged deeply in these questions of political sovereignty for both Hawai‘i and the Philippines over her 31 years. She was born and raised in Kapahulu, O‘ahu to an Ilokana mother and Japanese father who were active in local politics (her mother ran for the Hawai‘i State House of Representatives). Today she works at the Legal Aid Society on housing rights and is active with Women’s Voices, Women Speak as well as Decolonial Pin@ys. While Ramolete Hayashi has enjoyed many successes as a lawyer, she speaks plainly about the limitations of the law in advancing a truly transformative politics of justice. She admits most of her activism has been on the continent working in the “rights and demands” framework of U.S./ Western style organizing. In 2014, however, she visited Han-ayan, Surigao del Sur in Mindanao where she was exposed to people *building the future they want* rather than waiting for an elitist, violent government to recognize their right to life, land and a human dignity. Her poem “Life as a Prayer” eulogizes Dionel Campos, one of three Lumad leaders who was tortured and massacred by paramilitary troops on September 1, 2015. Ramolete was devastated by the massacre and knew she had to act. She immediately spearheaded a campaign with other members of Decolonial Pin@ys to voice outrage over the murders and to call for justice. As with the other two poems by Rodrigues and Derden, Ramolete’s is one part eulogy and one part call to action. While she grieves deeply over the shattered lives of the whole community and the three men who were massacred, she focuses on the life of a single person, Dionel Campos, at whose house she was a guest, and a single question he asked her: “What if Life Was a Prayer?”

When Ramolete Hayashi gives public talks on Han-Ayan, she always spends the longest time describing all that she learned from this extraordinary community, rather than emphasizing the horrors of their massacre and displacement. In a 2015 report back at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa she explained: “I never knew what real freedom was until I went to Han-Ayan.”

Although she did not describe it as such, Han-ayan was precisely the kind of autonomous zone that anarcha-indigenist scholars dream of. The ALCADDEV school (Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development) served as both school and community center, providing culturally relevant education and job training. ALCADDEV has won the national literacy award in 2001, 2005 and 2014 for its innovative methods with Lumad communities.

Despite these accolades, the school had been a target of soldiers who would routinely come into the schools in full armored uniforms while class was in session, among other abuses. According to Simbulan, the Lumad schools are “proud symbols of their community’s resistance against development aggression of mining companies. These schools help preserve their belief, culture, and practice that ‘land is life’ and that the community can collectively struggle for an ecologically sustainable way of life” (31). It was seven months after her trip that Ramolete received word of the three who had been tortured and killed: ALCADDEV’s Executive Director Emerito Samarca, people’s organization MAPASU Chair Dionel Campos and *Datu* (chief) Juvello Sinzo. Although it has not been confirmed through a trial, it is widely accepted among human rights groups that military and paramilitary troops connected to the corporate mining interests are responsible.²⁴ After the killings, 3,000 men, women and children were forcibly displaced from their ancestral lands. As of August 2016, they have not been allowed to return and still reside in a cramped facility in Tandag City.

Like Rodrigues, Ramolete's powerful elegy is as much about spirituality as it is about politics, presenting a compelling alternative to a mainstream, or colonized, Catholicism. Ramolete's begins her poem by quoting "*Manong*" (Ilokano for older brother) Dionel Campos: "I don't know your religion or if you pray before you eat. I do not pray before I eat. My life is a prayer." Campos' words prompt her to ask: "What if life was a prayer?" a refrain which begins each of the next eight stanzas. The poem unfolds as an extended meditation on how we must rethink Christianized notions of the sacred: "What if fields of *kamote, mais, palay, kalabasa* [sweet potato, corn, rice, squash] brought us to our knees at the soil's altar each morning?" Rather than a church's altar that requires parishioners to kneel and worship an abstract deity inside a building, Ramolete imagines a joyful humility on the land that accompanies harvest time. In this framework, access to land to grow our ancestral foods keeps us in regular sacred communion with the earth. The deconstruction of Christian imagery continues: sweat is compared to holy water, smoke from the fire is like "holy incense that sanctifies our lungs," and meals are like "communion" between the individual and collective body. "Rings in the trunks of trees" are like biblical scripture, and confession takes place between wronged and wrongdoer. A dyad of Father Sky and Mother Earth replace the all-male holy trinity. With each line, Ramolete holds precious the life-affirming set of Indigenous values inspired by her visit with Campos and this extraordinary community at Han-Ayan. Despite the Catholic Church's many crimes, Ramolete never castigates Christianity or rages against those who still believe. Church organizations have after all also been helpful to Lumad.²⁵ Instead, like Campos, she offers multiple sensuous images of the sacred "without agenda or ego," thus making indoor, church-based religious practice seem sterile by contrast.

Ramolete's critique of the church shifts to a critique of the state, in this case the "postcolonial" Philippine state and the Armed Forces of the Military, which receives \$116 million in U.S. funding per year, and collaborates with mining corporations to terrorize the Lumad.²⁶ The lush, idyllic images of "life as a prayer" end and are replaced by violent images of death squad police inflicting crimes that no one with any notion of the sacred could ever perpetuate: "What if the omens told us / of the boots of soldiers / Of the smoke of villages burning, / of the bullet holes in classrooms, / of children screaming, / of the rivers running red, / of the blood of teachers and elders soaking our ancestral land?" Having established all the beauty that Han-Ayan created, now readers know the terror inflicted by the state in their efforts to do the bidding of corporate miners. She asks further: "What then? / Would we pray /or would we live?" Before this seismic event each moment of life was a prayer because life was organized with sacredness at the center. Life has been cleaved between the time when we prayed, and the time that we live. Ramolete seems to ask, what happens to the sacred after lives and land have been so desacralized? When the sacred has been robbed away, does the idyllic "life as a prayer" remain a wish for another time?

Ramolete's critique recalls Tadiar's notion of divine sorrow and radical bereavement. Within these moments of mass death and destruction there is the sober realization, newly understood, that the state itself is the terrorist they've been warning us about. Tadiar writes:

I believe the relation to death opened up by divine sorrow and the ontological freedom it brings is one dimension of the radical historical experience that is the condition of possibility of revolution. It is indeed arguable that what is most threatening to the security state and may be considered the kernel of antagonism over which the state of exception is founded as a global rule is such radicalized

relations to death that the biopolitical state has no power over and that therefore undermine its claims to sovereignty” (*Things Fall Away* 375).

In other words, burying dead comrades plants revolutionary seeds in the souls of the survivors, who now have faced their worst nightmare, and possess the courage to reject the state altogether; they no longer fear its mandates to obey or die. Ramolete’s despair over “Manong Dionel” murder becomes an entry to the radicalized grief of the collective who have lost their leaders and their land. Here again is the power of elegy to claim the space between grief and action.

Although Tadiar’s sympathies lie with the communist revolutionaries of the New People’s Army, Ramolete’s politics aligns more with the anarcha-indigenist tradition discussed earlier. There is no temptation to “make demands” on the state because the state is the source of violence that has lost all authority: “Would we petition those same people to stop the ethnocide, the ecocide they created?” There is no desire to seize the state on behalf of workers, or “the surplus people” to use Tadiar’s term (*Things Fall Away* 374). Instead of models of “resistance,” Ramolete calls for a transformative politics that focuses on self-reliance and creative possibility, even for the refugee pushed to “the edges of mother earth” who may no longer have access to land. Ramolete’s theorizes a kind of sovereign state of being that outsmarts Western-style sovereignty with an endless array of dynamic options, even at this moment when so much has been stripped away: “Would our teachers hold art therapy at the refugee camp? / Would our students heal each other’s trauma with *hilot* (traditional healing)?” Remarkably, Ramolete depicts dancing, singing and planting, hopeful images of a people asserting their right to dignity and joy. She seems to argue that the people at Han-ayan had already achieved sovereignty, an *embodied* freedom that surpasses what any church, military or government can claim to provide or take away.

What if life was a prayer
And we were being made, moment by moment, by the movement
And no matter how far to the edges of mother earth we were pushed,
we could experience sovereignty,
because it was a practice, not a prayer
And we already, always, and after
embodied the same freedom we were fighting for?

In short, she uses the term “sovereignty” but her usage is closer to the Hawaiian use of “ea” discussed earlier. In *Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land and Sovereignty*, Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua’s writes: “A shared characteristic in each of these translations is that ea (sovereignty, breathing, rising) is an active state of being. Like breathing, ea cannot be achieved or possessed; it requires constant action day after day, generation after generation”(3-4). But what does it mean that the poem’s title is “Life Is A Prayer” when in these final lines, she concludes that it is not? The distinction is not entirely clear. Perhaps she still agrees with Campos that life *is* a prayer, but she is drawing a distinction between *life as a prayer* and *sovereignty as a practice*, between the life of the landed and the sovereignty of landless. When we are on our ancestral land, our sacred bond with the earth is easy. But to “experience sovereignty” when we are displaced from land is not easy. Sovereignty here is something we must *practice* or *practice at*; in other words, we are forever in an experimental mode is necessary until we get it right. Like ea, sovereignty is not a state that can be achieved but must be strived for through movement, as Ramolette says “already, always and after.” This striving for sovereignty in the midst of deep oppression recreates us, demanding we turn our grief into action.

More than Rodrigues and Derden, Ramolete is plainspoken about her belief in the interconnectedness of Filipin@ and Hawaiian struggles. Although Ramolete makes no mention of Hawai‘i in the poem, at her performance in July 2016 at Nā Hua Ea, she explained first what the Lumad massacre can teach us here in Hawai‘i about the global struggle against settler colonialism:

We know that 6000 Filipinos leave the Philippine everyday as overseas workers. I am the daughter of an immigrant to Hawai‘i, and the Philippine labor export policy makes us complicit in the settling other Indigenous lands. And I’m here to say that our sovereignties are definitely interlinked as they should be. As long as the Philippines is not its own sovereign place that has an economy that is local and sustainable then our people are going to continue to go abroad to work and try to support their families.

Ramolete puts pressure on the state policies that collaborate with international capital to make Filipin@s, to use Rhacel Parrenas’ term “the servants of the globalization.” In contrast with mainstream immigration rights discourse that foregrounds mobility across borders (“migration is beautiful!”) and undertheorizes Indigenous land claims, Ramolete takes a holistic view.

Ramolete argues that we must build a resistance movement that takes seriously the struggles of immigrant and Indigenous peoples, one that, in the words of “No One is Illegal,” “strives and struggles for the right to remain, the freedom to move, and the right to return.” It seems to me this is not a perspective we hear enough in Hawai‘i. If Lumad and other Filipin@s had the *right to remain* and the *right to return*, as so many wish they could, Filipin@s could build a more localized and sustainable economy. Ramolete’s perspective provides the challenge to build stronger solidarity with Indigenous and poor communities in Philippines at risk for displacement,

and in doing so, diasporic Filipin@s might be able to support Filipin@ and Hawaiian sovereignty simultaneously.

Conclusion

While writing this chapter in the summer of 2016, a dear *kasama* (comrade) Bernadette “Gigi” Miranda died mysteriously in her sleep at the age of 43. She was a poet, a videographer, and a food justice warrior. She was also one of the co-founders of Women’s Voices, Women Speak and as such, believed deeply in a sovereignty of Hawai‘i, the Philippines and all our sacred islands. Her passing dealt a terrible blow to all of us in WVWS and Decolonial Pin@ys. Strangely, at her memorial service, no poems were read to eulogize her amazing life. People made powerful speeches, but no poems were written in time for the well-attended celebration and scattering of her ashes on the North shore of O‘ahu. I realized that sometimes there is a gap between the day someone dies and the day that elegies are ready to be shared with the world. Perhaps the gap is even wider for the kind of poems that intend both to eulogize and call to action, particularly against state-sponsored murders. In the nine days after Gigi’s death, Decolonial Pin@ys held a “non-vena” (in contrast with the Catholic novena) to share stories and honor her life. We also made the decision to take a break before organizing any new campaigns to allow for a proper time of grieving. Although this chapter is entitled “Grief into Action,” I learned from Gigi’s passing how much grief can actually derail us from struggle. But perhaps Rodrigues, Derden and Ramolete Hayashi’s poems can remind us that “struggle” and “resistance” take many forms. As we mourn our dead, we are reminded how to properly care for the living. As we care for ourselves, we nourish our resolve to better care for all our sacred

places and connection to each other. We can compost our worms, celebrate our multiple genders, and dance our way to new and better futures.

In each of these poems, we are being asked to mourn the death of individuals, but in the tradition of kanikau, we are asked also to consider the way that land suffers too. These Filipinas in Hawai‘i are weaving together the mourning over the lands of our ancestors and the lands on which we settle. This is not always an easy task. Our complex positionality is not always easy to articulate; our solidarity not easy to forge. These beautiful elegies come from articulating multiple traumas, those of our family, our diasporic family and our activist family, allowing us to move past numbness and let our bereavement radicalize us. As Hawai‘i-born Filipina poet and slam coach Lyz Soto has written about the power of the spoken word movement: “The brain tells us how to get things done, but the heart tells us why we should do them” (30). In listening to our poets, we build more heart-centered movements to end human suffering and maximize ea on all our homelands.

Notes

¹ Wahine means woman, and māhūwahine is often loosely translated as “transgender woman,” but within a Hawaiian understanding māhū have their own unique place that exceeds these Western gender binary.

² Eulogy and elegy serve same purpose but technically are different genres. Eulogy generally refers to a *speech* honoring the dead where elegy is a *poem or song*. For this essay, I use terms “elegy” and “eulogistic poem” interchangeably.

³ For more on the Filipin@ Catholic ritual and the connection to the Philippine revolution, See Raymon Ito’s classic text, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910*

⁴ I wish to acknowledge to Filipina librarians and culture bearers Nicki Garces and Elena Clariza for their assistance on this section.

⁵ Two more examples of Filipin@ American elegy with less obvious Filipin@ cultural markers include Hawai‘i’s own Lyz Soto’s *Eulogies*, a chapbook of poetry in memorial to her

ex-husband's battle with schizophrenia and Melissa Roxas's "Elegy for Alexander Martin Remollino" a fellow poet activist who died from complications with pneumonia.

⁶ Mākuā Valley is a major site of struggle against militarization in Hawai'i, which thankfully has been free of live-fire training for the last ten years. See DMZ/Aloha 'Āina for more updates.

⁷ By bourgeois multiculturalism I refer to middle class assimilation model promoted by the settler state, within which "melting pot" multiculturalism is a key feature. For more discussion of this phenomenon, see Dylan Rodriguez's *Suspended Apocalypse: White Supremacy, Genocide, and the Filipino Condition*.

⁸ See National Priorities Project. www.nationalpriorities.org/campaigns/how-military-spending-has-changed/

⁹ See Kyle Kajihiro's "Resistance Against Militarization of the Pacific." www.wp.hawaiipeaceandjustice.org/2012/10/07/resistance-against-militarization-of-the-pacific/

¹⁰ See White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders' "Fact Sheet: What You Should Know about Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders."

www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/asian-americans-initiative/what-you-should-know.pdf

¹¹ See Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation's "Secure Trade in the APEC Region."

¹² See "Imagining Ourselves: Reflections on the Controversy over Lois-Ann Yamanaka's *Blu's Hanging*" in *Amerasia Journal* 26:2 (2000): 195-207.

¹³ Wahiawā is also the hometown of Army General Antontio Taguba, who wrote the infamous Taguba Report on Abu Ghraib prison torture in 2004.

¹⁴ Manu Meyer defines kapu aloha as "discipline of compassion," which was a central strategy of the protectors on Mauna Kea particularly during the stand-offs with armed personnel from Department of Land and Natural Resources, many of them who were Hawaiian (Meyer). Protect Mauna Kea has a multi-point protocol that begins with a definition of kapu aloha as "firm commitment to aloha," "conducting oneself in prayer and ceremony" ("Protocol for Kapu Aloha"). Satyagraha is a similar concept of nonviolent resistance that was popularized by Gandhi in the Indian movement for independence from British occupation.

¹⁵ Mullins-Ibrahim (née Nemeth) performs one poem from the collection "Na Wahine Koa" that includes footage of the impacts of militarism in Hawai'i www.youtube.com/watch?v=HaIvb57kHfw

¹⁶ See chapter two for further discussion of Terri Keko'olani's contributions to WVWS and multiple social justice movements.

¹⁷ On June 17, 1897, Queen Lili'uokalani traveled to Washington D.C. and registered her letter of protest against the overthrow. The letter was certified with a red ribbon and remains in the National Archives. Hawaiian musician Liko Martin wrote a song to commemorate her actions, "Red Ribbon Song" (Martin).

¹⁸ One of the key tenets to the "gay panic" or "trans panic" defense is the transphobic assumption that no heterosexual cisman would knowingly consent to sex with a transwoman. However, it is not uncommon for cismen to pursue certain establishments knowing they are frequented by transwomen, then plead ignorance or repulsion to protect themselves from public scorn. It is important to note also that because Laude is deceased she cannot defend herself against Pemberton's accusations. For instance, we do not know whether she consensually went

with Pemberton to the hotel room in the first place, or whether she consented to the sex. Police reported they found “bruises, cuts and bite marks on his [sic] body” (Flores). As her fiancée Marc Sueselbeck commented: “Only two people know what happened in that room...One of them wants to protect himself, and the other one is dead” (Talusán).

¹⁹ For more discussion of the limitations of law in another case of a murdered transwoman of color, see Cynthia G. Franklin and Laura E. Lyons’ “‘I Have a Family’: Relational Witnessing and the Evidentiary Power of Grief in the Gwen Araujo Case.”

²⁰ The event flyer describes the event thus: “Nā Hua Ea is part of a month-long series, building momentum toward ka Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea. Join us for an evening filled with thought-provoking poetry, mele, and conversation, where we weave our stories together and commit to ‘defending life with the spear of memory.’ Come enjoy awa, share potluck, learn, listen and even present a piece alongside some of Hawai‘i’s groundbreaking poets and lyricists.” The word *hua* has multiple meanings including egg, seed, word, rallying cry, result, and to bear fruit. Ea has been loosely defined as sovereignty or independence, but also has multiple meanings including air, breath and to rise up. Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua writes “ea is an active state of being. Like breathing, ea cannot be achieved or possessed; it requires constant action day after day, generation after generation” (3-4). See wehewehe.org.

²¹ According to Center for World Indigenous Studies, “The Lumad is a term being used to denote a group of Indigenous peoples of the southern Philippines. It is a Cebuano term meaning “native” or “Indigenous”. The term is short for Katawhang Lumad (literally “Indigenous peoples”), the autonym officially adopted by the delegates of the Lumad Mindanaw Peoples Federation (LMPF) founding assembly on 26 June 1986 at the Guadalupe Formation Center, Balindog, Kidapawan, Cotabato, Philippines. It is the self-ascription and collective identity of the non-Islamized Indigenous peoples of Mindanao. There are 18 Lumad ethnolinguistic groups namely, Atta, Bagobo, Banwaon, B’laan, Bukidnon, Dibabawon, Higaonon, Mamanwa, Mandaya, Manguwangan, Manobo, Mansaka, Subanon, Tagakaolo, Tasaday, Tboli, Teduray, and Ubo.” intercontinentalcry.org/Indigenous-peoples/lumad/

²² For more discussion of the Westphalian nation-state model’s impact on land and labor, see Ellen-Rae Cachola’s “Reading the Landscape of U.S. Settler Colonialism in Southern O‘ahu.”

²³ Richard J.F. Day writes of indigena-anarchism in *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements*: “This alternative ethico-political couple relies upon, and results from, getting over the hope that the state and corporate forms, as structures of domination, exploitation and division, are somehow capable of producing effects of emancipation. By avoiding making demands in the first place, it offers a way out of the cycle through which requests for ‘freedom’ or ‘rights’ are used to justify an intensification of the societies of discipline and control” (15).

²⁴ For more details on the massacre and the Lumad struggle against corporate mining, see Tudla Productions’ documentary “Atohan (Fight)” (2016).

²⁵ Simbulan explains that both the church hierarchy and grassroots church groups have organized against the Mining Act, saying it “destroys life” (33).

²⁶ Oplan Bayanihan is the counterinsurgency program launched of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) that has come under wide criticism for its human rights abuses of the Lumad and Muslim peoples’ organizations. The United States has funded and trained the AFP as

part of its “war on terror,” but many Filipin@s argue the purpose is to protect corporate mining interests in Mindanao. In April 2016, the U.S. has promised to increase AFP funding from \$50 million to \$120 million in annual funding, alleging this militarization is necessary to contain China’s influence in the region. (“Philippines Gets U.S. Military Aid,” Lucas and Shahshahani).

CONCLUSION

Hawai‘i’s movements for demilitarization and de-occupation enjoyed a glimmer of hope in 2014 when the Obama administration announced it would make preparations to downsize the Army by as much as fourteen percent. O‘ahu Council for Army Downsizing (OCAD), a group which includes many veterans, described this proposal as a “once in a century opportunity” to reduce the military in Hawai‘i, which strains the local economy in multiple ways, especially in terms of housing, schools and roads (Caron, “Army Downsize”). OCAD argued that the reduction made sense from the Army’s point of view also, given the high cost of training troops in Hawai‘i and the barriers of troops and military assault vehicles to deploy from Hawai‘i’s shores (Cole). Dozens of Hawaiian sovereignty supporters and their allies including Women’s Voices, Women Speak and Decolonial Pin@ys testified at the two community forums, emphasizing the illegality of U.S. occupation and the human and environmental costs of war. The first of these forums was held in Wahiawa, the same town where Antonio Taguba grew up, which drew mostly pro-military voices, and at Hale Koa, a military hotel in Waikīkī, which drew more demilitarization activists and Hawaiian sovereignty supporters (Caron, “Army Downsize”). In the end, the Chamber of Commerce and the political elite led a well-funded campaign called “Keep Hawaii’s Heroes: Save Our Bases, Our Communities Depend on It,” defending Hawai‘i’s hyper dependence on the military and drowning out all alternative voices. Controversy arose when all state agencies were instructed by the Mayor to post the Chamber’s posters, even at the Department of Motor Vehicles. In the end, the Army decided to reduce Hawai‘i’s troops by only 1,200, far fewer than the 20,000 that was hoped for (Mendoza).

The scenario above captures how the settler state stokes fears of economic disaster to stifle dissent and stunt political self-determination. As Kathy Ferguson and Phyllis Turnbull

describe the coercive nature of these campaigns: “The stories of the national security state operate as extortion schemes, elaborate threats, and bribes inducing citizens to accept things as they are” (198). Living in Hawai‘i means perpetually being told there is no alternative but to accept an American economy based on endless war. The insidiousness of this logic is not unlike the abuser who tells his spouse that she has no future without him, inflicting terror to maintain a constant state of fear. In “Independent Hawaiian Futures: Bring on the EA-rator,” Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua discusses the debilitating role of fear in Kānaka Maoli communities who have not been given enough opportunities to imagine their future on Hawaiian terms. Rather than accepting the supposed binary of independence v. domestic non-dependence, Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua encourages Kānaka Maoli to imagine a multiplicity of options grounded in the needs and desires of ordinary, working class Hawaiians. She writes: “We should expand our political vision and nurture a profusion of visions for independence, bubbling up so as to break through the anxieties that stifle various possible futures.” When given opportunities for political education or “EA-education,” Kānaka Maoli and their allies become excited about their potential to manifest a genuinely independent Hawai‘i. Transforming that fear into courage is an ongoing priority, a challenge that the activists and artists in this dissertation have each contributed to in their own unique ways.

Emergent Allies

“You live in Hawai‘i. Do you know its history and its people at all?”

—Jovita Rodas Zimmerman, *Carmela*

“In Hawai‘i, *utang na loób* belongs to Native Hawaiians, not to the U.S. government, because we live in a stolen Hawaiian nation, and it is Native Hawaiian people who are being subjugated.”

— Dean Itsuji Saranillio, “Colonial Amnesia: Rethinking Filipino ‘American’ Settler Empowerment in the U.S. Colony of Hawai‘i

Allyship with regard to Filipin@s is often centered on the United States. The Philippines is considered a “staunch ally” of the U.S. as evident in over a century of war making. It is an allyship grounded in the “bromance” of militarism and nation-statism. In contrast, my intervention foregrounds an allyship grounded in anti-imperialist art and activism, with a sober understanding that in a settler colonial context, settlement is always fraught with tension. The ongoing military occupation by the United States is the most obvious impediment to Kanaka Maoli self-determination; Hawaiians cannot exercise control over lands that are rightfully theirs. But even if the U.S. military and state bureaucracies were to leave tomorrow, Hawaiians would remain minoritized on their own land. Their needs and desires must compete with those of the settler majority who may or may not be sympathetic with the sovereignty movement, and if they are sympathetic, don’t know how to exercise their solidarity. The ongoing migration by hundreds of thousands of settlers and tourists is a force over which Kanaka Maoli have little control. This is a tension that will not go away. Filipin@s enter this settler colonial context from the Philippines, from North America, and elsewhere and must ask themselves what kind of political footprint we want to leave. As Zimmerman and Saranillio’s quote reminds us, it incumbent upon Filipin@s to learn Hawai‘i’s colonial history and ally ourselves with the Indigenous struggle, especially given Filipin@s own relationship to U.S. imperialism.

“Emergent Allies” redirects the question of Filipin@ allyship to Kānaka Maoli and their struggle for independence, while recognizing why such an alliance is sometimes uneasy to forge. Filipin@s can be understood as ideal or natural allies of ‘Ōiwi given the ongoing legacy of colonialism and white supremacy the United States inflicted on both nations. Like Hawaiians,

Filipin@s have been deemed savage, uncivilized, and unfit to govern themselves. Filipin@s also know how colonial heteropatriarchal norms devastate Indigenous and non-Christian gender and sexuality in insidious ways. At the same time, colonialism has meant centuries of misinformation about Indigenous people and the superiority of Western land use, economics, and culture. Filipin@s know how to wage anti-colonial resistance, having the armies of Spain, the U.S., and Japan, as well as the Philippine state itself. They have important lessons for the empowerment of women and youth, for developing autonomous regions, and for understanding the connections between land restoration and community restoration. At the same time, the mass exodus of Filipin@s into Hawai‘i and other nations is a reminder of the desperate poverty that continues to plague the Philippines, a poverty that makes diasporic Filipin@s, particularly the undocumented or other marginalized, politically disempowered and vulnerable to state discipline.¹ With regard to militarized Filipin@s, Taguba has proven that even those who identify as patriotic Filipin@ Americans have the potential to disrupt the dictates of empire through a trenchant critique of torture and the wars on terror. At the same time, Taguba’s statements against Philippine, Hawaiian and Puerto Rican sovereignties perpetuate the same 19th century imperial logic of President McKinley himself. There are multiple efforts in Hawai‘i to express solidarity with Philippines, for example, the political campaigns to support water rights in the Cordilleras or human rights for Lumads in Han-Ayan. On one hand, these campaigns educate Hawai‘i’s people on the global nature of empire, both the state and corporate versions. On the down side, the alarming level of violence in the Philippines can make life in Hawai‘i seem easy by comparison, recreating the colonial-touristic notion of Hawai‘i as paradise made possible through U.S. benevolence, a key barrier for Hawaiian self-determination. I understand my task is to gather the stories of anti-imperialist Filipin@s in Hawai‘i who aim to unpack this complicated inheritance

in creative and dynamic ways. It's not my intention to paper over these tensions, but instead to foreground the kind of allyship that's brave enough to honor these uncomfortable truths while still hopeful enough to envision truly decolonized futures.

Decolonial Courage

My heart for the revolution, for getting rid of U.S. imperialism, for supporting the Kānaka Maoli for their self-determination and independence, and for the liberation of the working class has never died. In fact the flames in my heart just keep on burning.

— Ray Catania, Labor organizer at the 2011 Moana Nui Conference.

My dissertation is motivated by an ethical urgency to dismantle the U.S. colonial occupation of Hawai'i, and to foreground the amazing political potential of anti-imperialist Filipin@ artists and activists in Hawai'i to contribute to that outcome. As Filipin@s engage more deeply with our own history of de/colonization, we can commit to different futures outside imperial domination, heteropatriarchy, and global capitalism. These topics are not easy to address, and this task would have been much harder had it not for the inspiration I gleaned from these writers, leaders and thinkers chipping away at empire one day after the other.

Unfortunately there were many vitally important voices I could not include. At the 2011 Moana Nui Conference, Kaua'i-based labor leader Ray Catania gave a rousing speech that exemplifies the decolonial courage necessary to engage in the struggle for Hawaiian independence in the long-term. Catania works to bring land and labor struggles together, and embrace other vital movements for justice like Black Lives Matter and LGBT liberation as we all “raise hell against capitalism” (Catania). In terms of bringing land and labor together, Ellen-Rae Cachola and Aunty Terri's walking tour of Waikīkī also deserve special mention. This remapping project has

helped working class youth interrogate the military-touristic complex that displaced Indigenous and sustainable ways of life.² Jeff Acido's annual Stations of the Cross, a kind of decolonial Lenten walking tour of Kalihi, has grown larger every year, bringing working class youth from the neighborhood into leadership roles to teach a site-specific "history from below" that weaves together immigrant and Indigenous stories of liberation.³ AF3IRM, an anti-imperialist transnational feminist organization founded by New York based Filipina novelist Ninotchka Rosca, opened a chapter in Hawai'i in 2014, and has held public forums on immigration rights while also coming out in support of Hawaiian self-determination. All of these projects are promising signs that decolonial Filipin@s in Hawai'i are taking leadership to foment the grassroots political power necessary to enact what Johnny Verzon called the "Filipino Hawaiian Alliance" back in 1996.

In terms of creative works, I regret I could not make space for two recent novels that both address the fear that communities under military occupation face, R. Zamora Linmark's 2011 *Leche* and Jackie Pias Carlin's 2015 *Aunty's Place*. Importantly, these two novelists each capture different demilitarization *success* stories. *Leche* features a scene memorializing the U.S. withdrawal from Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Force Base in 1992. The protagonist Vince listens in as his fellow bus riders debate the pros and cons of this "once in a lifetime" spectacle: that of dozens of military's assault vehicles and personnel pulling out of the Philippines. Although the troops would come back after 9/11 per President Macapagal-Arroyo's request, this moment marks a triumph that must not be forgotten. Carlin's *Aunty's Place* performs a similar decolonial commemoration. The plot centers on the story of Kaho'olawe and the long struggle by Kānaka Maoli to end the Navy's use as of the island for target practice. Set in 1976 during the rise of the Protect Kaho'olawe movement and the close of the Vietnam war,

Carlin includes a “debate scene” similar to the one in *Leche* in which the community members voice their support for the military and U.S. national security interests on the one side, while others defend the Hawaiian struggle or self-determination and dignity on the other. The disgrace of the Kaho‘olawe bombing is mirrored in the disgrace of domestic violence impacting families, and the victory of cessation of the bombing runs parallel to the emergent becoming of the mähūwahine character Alana, who affirms her emerging gender identity to her family just as she commits herself to the cause of Kaho‘olawe. These novels offer us tools to interrogate this militarized, colonized reality by returning attention to these successes against what was then considered “impossible.” Importantly, these novelists explore how the liberation of gay men, women and mähū (transgender/nonbinary gendered people) intersect with these discourses of de/colonization and de/militarization in complicated ways. They also remind us of the critical role artists play in memorializing those miracle moments of the past to keep our minds open to the many options we have for the future.

In chapters one and four I made reference to Nā Hua Ea, literally “Sovereign Words,” a night of poetry and mele (song), as offering an important place of decolonial courage making for both artists and activists, and for both Kānaka Maoli and their allies. It was there that I first heard Grace Caligtan Alvaro perform her poem “Transition” in which she so beautifully compares the experience of a woman giving birth to that of an emergent Hawai‘i pointed toward sovereignty or ea. Like the pregnant woman who shakes with fear, Caligtan Alvaro interrogates the political trembling at what a sovereign Hawai‘i might mean: “Longing to bring this island close, / It feels too far in the distance / So we breathe. We find another. Exhale.” As Caligtan Alvaro is actually a birth attendant and a descendent of Kankanaey Igorot and Ilocana midwives, this is not just metaphor for her. The poem, in fact, is dedicated to a family she assisted who was present at the

event, poet-activist-scholars Brandy Nālani McDougal and Craig Santos Perez and their daughter Kaikainali‘i Hāleta. Caligtan Alvaro believes that in order for lāhui to be free, *ea must be present in these first moments of life*. She encourages birthing women and their loved ones to stand up for themselves against a medical establishment that instills paranoia over our bodies and against a political establishment that instills paranoia over what the future holds. As she reads her poem’s refrain: “She is coming, she is coming,” I could feel the audience hold its breath, as she guided us into that wise certainty that a better future awaits, and that we must prepare ourselves to take full responsibility. Similarly, as a community that dreams of a sovereign Hawai‘i, we must believe in our own mana. We must believe in the inevitability of ea just as the forces against us believe in the inevitability of capitalism, imperialism, patriarchy, and the destruction of all our sacred sites. Decolonial courage requires we lean into the wisdom of all our poet-activists from Jose Libornio to Grace Caligtan Alvaro, and everyone in between, who help us realize the full stretch of our decolonial potential: “The future ancestors already know. They celebrate Ea. / She is coming, she is coming. We promise she is coming.”

Notes

¹ According to Migration Policy Institute, 40% of undocumented immigrants in Hawai‘i are Filipin@ (Stoney and Batalova).

² See Ellen-Rae Cachola’s “Reading the Landscape of U.S. Settler Colonialism in Southern O‘ahu.”

³ See Jeffrey Acido and Gordon Lee’s *On the Edge of Hope and Healing: Flipping the Script of Filipinos in Hawai‘i*.

GLOSSARY

All terms are Hawaiian unless indicated otherwise. After each entry I indicate the writer or source text. Mahalo to ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui, Noe Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, Eleanor Kleiber, and wehewehe.org.

aikāne—intimate, often sexual relationship with someone of the same gender. (ho‘omanawanui)

‘āina—lit. “that which feeds.” The Hawaiian term for land, an important symbol and metaphor in Hawaiian consciousness often expressed poetically in oral and written poetry. (ho‘omanawanui)

ali‘i (ali‘i nui, ali‘i ‘aimoku, kaukau ali‘i, etc.)—general term for the chiefs, royalty, ruling class; different terms indicate status level; ali‘i nui is literally, the “important leader,” ali‘i ‘aimoku is “the leader of the land,” kaukau ali‘i, is a lesser-ranking chief. (ho‘omanawanui)

ea – refers to political independence and is often translated as “sovereignty.” It also carries the meaning of “life” and “breath,” among other things. A shared characteristic in each of these translations is that ea is an active state of being. Like breathing, ea cannot be achieved or possessed; it requires constant action day after day, generation after generation
King Kamehameha III famously proclaimed, “ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono” “*The sovereignty of the land continues through justice and proper acts.*” (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua)

iwi kupuna – bones of the ancestors (wehewehe.org)

kalo – taro. 1. n. Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*), a kind of aroid cultivated since ancient times for food, spreading widely from the tropics of the Old World. In Hawai‘i, taro has been the staple from earliest times to the present, and here its culture developed greatly, including more than 300 forms. All parts of the plant are eaten, its starchy root principally as poi, and its leaves as lū‘au. It is a perennial herb consisting of a cluster of long-stemmed, heart-shaped leaves rising 30 cm. or more from underground tubers or corms. (wehewehe.org).

Kanaka Maoli, Kanaka ‘Ōiwi, ‘Ōiwi Maoli—synonymous terms meaning Indigenous Hawaiian. (ho‘omanawanui)

kapu - Taboo, prohibition; special privilege or exemption from ordinary taboo; sacredness; prohibited, forbidden; sacred, holy, consecrated; no trespassing, keep out. ho‘o.kapu To make taboo, prohibit, sanctify consecrate, forbid. (wehewehe.org)

kū ki‘ai mauna – guardians standing for the mountain. Rather than “activist,” this has become the preferred term for many protecting Mauna Kea and Haleakalā from desecration.

kuleana – simultaneously one’s rights or privilege and one’s responsibilities. This is an important concept in Hawaiian culture, and people often carry multiple kuleana in myriad ways (personal, familial, cultural, professional, etc.) (ho‘omanawanui)

lāhui - *lāhui*, *lāhui Hawai‘i*—lit. “nation, Hawaiian nation.” The *lāhui* is both the nation in a political sense, particularly during the period of the Hawaiian monarchy (1840–1893), but also applied to those who trace genealogy to the aboriginal people of the Hawaiian islands prior to Western contact in 1778 (the federal and state standard defining the term Native Hawaiian). (ho‘omanawanui)

mahalo – thanks, appreciation; *mahalo nui*, *mahalo nui loa* are common variations that mean many thanks, with great appreciation. (ho‘omanawanui)

māhū - in Native Hawaiian culture this refers to an individual who may be considered third-gendered with characteristics of both sexes, usually a male to female. In contemporary Hawai‘i the word is also used to describe people who are transgender, transvestites, or gay. (Kleiber)

mālama ‘āina—lit. “to care for the land.” Similar to *aloha ‘āina*. (ho‘omanawanui)

mana—spiritual power, charisma. (ho‘omanawanui)

mana wahine—a kind of Indigenous feminism; the power of women. (ho‘omanawanui)

‘*Ōiwi* – See Kanaka Maoli.

pono – Hawaiian concept of justice, balance, harmony. A very important cultural practice. *wahi pana*—lit. “places made famous through stories about them.” A term used to describe legendary places that distinguish how they are special and why they are remembered and celebrated over time. (ho‘omanawanui)

sakadas – Cebuano for contract workers

utang na loób – Tagalog for debt of gratitude

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